



Window on Jordan

Wedding one's way through the marriage game

By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star

YES, SHE still is still around, Umm Ibrahim, 62, works in trading but she is also a *Khatibah*, a woman who finds marriage suitors and brings them together. This was the traditional way of marriage that was followed long ago. Then, it was the mother of the groom or one of his relatives that began the search for a suitable partner.

If the right girl was found, the mother would visit her family, and after the initial acceptance, the men of the household would step in and start the formal process of arrangement.

With the passing of time, these "rituals" have

changed. Today, most young people prefer to find their own partners.

However, the existence of Umm Ibrahim and others like her means that some things will never change, and that there are those who don't want to submit to the so-called modern ways. Some are even saying that this is a slap in the face to the notions of love and romance.

"My eldest son was married after what he called a 'love at first sight' affair; I tried to persuade him to let me find him another girl, but he refused," Umm Ibrahim said, stressing that her son isn't happy in his marriage.

"On the contrary, my other two sons, whose

brides I chose myself, are very pleased with their wives, and thank me on every occasion," she added.

In our days, marriage meant a big responsibility and expensive demands. These prevented many men from entering the golden cage.

"The dowry of the bride is the biggest obstacle for any groom. Then it is finding a house and then, buying a car." All these have affected the age of marriage. "Whereas before a girl would wed at 17, today her wedding age has increased to between the ages of 26 and 30," Umm Ibrahim continued.

Her work starts when someone comes to her

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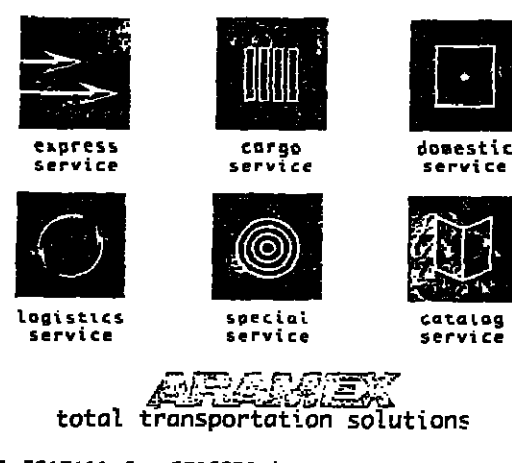


The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Femme libérée
à pas comptés
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أسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Tension high after Israelis killing of Palestinians at roadblock

HEBRON (Agencies)—Israeli soldiers opened fire on an Arab-owned van at a West Bank roadblock Tuesday, killing three Palestinian passengers and wounding at least four. An Israeli soldier was injured after what the army said was an attempt by the van to run the roadblock.

As news of the incident spread, protests erupted in the nearby town of Hebron. Dozens of Palestinians threw stones at Israeli soldiers in the divided city.

The workers were returning from construction jobs in Israel, and approached soldiers already on alert because of Wednesday evening's start of the Jewish Purim observance. It was during Purim in 1994 that settler Baruch Goldstein opened fire at a mosque in Hebron, killing 29 worshippers. In 1996, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew up a bus in Tel Aviv during Purim, killing 14.

The shooting came at a time of deadlock between Israel and the Palestinians over the scope of an Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank. Palestinian anger over the stalled negotiations has been running high, and the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, has warned of a possible new Palestinian uprising against Israel.

Israeli officials said the van tried to run over an Israeli soldier who was lightly injured. Israeli troops then opened fire, killing three. Palestinian officials said the van veered off the road because of mechanical problems.

Palestinian witnesses had a different account. Lafi Ghais, a Palestinian security officer told Reuters that "the Ford entered the checkpoint as usual. It didn't stop because the soldiers didn't order it to stop and then one soldier shot at the car." "It didn't run

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Following Prince Hassan's visit to Tel Aviv 'New beginning' marked in Jordan, Israel ties

By a Star Staff Writer & agency reports

JORDAN AND Israel marked "a new beginning" in bilateral relations this week. Both agreed to take steps to "reinvigorate the peace process, and end months of strained relations."

Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held talks Tuesday in Tel Aviv. The Prime Minister's spokesman said the visit "is a landmark change for the better." Netanyahu agreed, saying, "We have had a new beginning."

Relations between the two countries deteriorated after Mossad agents tried to assassinate Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman last September. Jordanian police arrested two of the agents and allowed their release only after Israel agreed to free Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners including Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. Tension eased after Mossad chief Danny Yatom handed in his resignation earlier this month after another Mossad covert operation went wrong in Switzerland.

At the end of his one-day visit to Tel Aviv, Prince Hassan and Netanyahu issued a 10-point joint statement calling for a resumption of multilateral negotiations.

The statement said Israel has established a \$100 million fund to promote "joint ventures and other economic activities in Jordan." The two countries said they will ask the European Community to follow a US lead and accord duty-free entry to products of Jordanian-Israeli origin.

According to the statement, Israel will divert more flights from its small airport at Eilat to Jordan's neighboring Agaba. Both leaders also welcomed Japan's contribution to the rebuilding of Allenby (King Hussein) Bridge.

Prince Hassan also briefed Netanyahu on his meeting with



Prince Hassan meeting with Netanyahu in Tel Aviv on Tuesday

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the West Bank town of Ramallah Monday.

Although he said he was not coming to Israel to mediate on behalf of the Palestinians, the Prince told journalists in Ramallah his discussions with Netanyahu will focus "on the need to respect the requirements of the Palestinians and the full implementation of the accords."

Israel and the Palestinian Authority signed interim peace accords in 1993, but the process has broken down over Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank, rejected by the Palestinian Authority as a violation of the 1993 interim agreement.

US and European attempts to force Israel to carry out a second pullback from the West Bank have proved unsuccessful; Netanyahu has warned the US not to pressure Israel into making a wide-ranging redeployment from the occupied areas.

Israel has said it will pull out of 10 percent of the territories while Palestinians are demanding a full withdrawal from the land Israel occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, including East Jerusalem.

It was not immediately known if Jordanian efforts to convince Israel to complete its withdrawal from the West Bank and to begin negotiations on the territories' final status made any progress.

Amman vowed to support the Palestinians in any decision they make in the peace process.

But sources said talks between Prince Hassan and President Arafat in Ramallah may have focused on a US proposal for a 13 percent troop withdrawal from the West Bank, rejected by the Palestinian Authority as a violation of the 1993 interim agreement.

Jordan has said it would support any Palestinian policy on an Israeli withdrawal. But a Palestinian representative in Amman said Jordan "expects a more lenient position from the Palestinian Authority."

At their meeting in the West Bank, the Prince and Arafat called on Israel to "respect and implement" the agreements signed in the White House four years ago between Israel and the Palestinians.

Prince Hassan told reporters

in Tel Aviv that Jordan and Israel will cooperate "on the basis of respect for the security of each country in this region."

Praising Prince Hassan as a friend and a world statesman, Netanyahu said, "This relationship [between Jordan and Israel] should and can serve as a model for the benefits of peace for others as well."

The delegation accompanying Prince Hassan included the Lower House Speaker, Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, a number of cabinet members and members of parliament, leading businessmen and chief editors of Jordanian papers.

Speaking at a dinner banquet given in his honor on Tuesday by the Israeli Prime Minister, Prince Hassan said "our commitment is to this kind of peace. A peace in which people believe," he said.

The Crown Prince reiterated Jordan's moral responsibility towards the Palestinians as well as Jordan's continued support of their Palestinian brethren.

Continued on page 2

Rejecting government interference PAs defend role as 'national duty'

By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star

THE RELATIONSHIP between the government and professional associations seems to be mutual. Both are weary of each other. The coming confrontation may center on a proposed law for professional associations which, the government hopes, will greatly limit their social and political role.

But until now the government has not sent a draft law to the Lower House, although on many occasions it hinted that it was looking into ways to curtail the political influence of associations on their members. If the government unveils a draft law, the issue is bound to create tensions in relations with the PAs.

"I think that the reaction of the PAs to a new law will be more violent and more drastic than what happened during the amendment to the Press and Publication Law," adds Dr. Abu Meizer, president of the Dentists Association (DA).

On one hand, observers say, the government is adopting a contentious attitude, believing that it is time for the associations to stop meddling in politics and stick to serving their members and their respected professions.

But this is certainly not the view of the associations whose leaders say their work is part of what they term as "national duty" which inevitably involves politics.

The newly elected president of the largest and most powerful of the associations, the

Jordan Engineers' Association (JEA), Husni Abu Ghaida stresses that there is no separation between national actions and professional ones.

"The association's law confirms the protection of the member's life and freedom. Isn't this what we call politics?" Abu Ghaida asks.

Rumors about the government's attempt to present a unified law governing all the activities of professional associations will almost certainly lead to a political crisis, observers say. Moreover, the proposed law will undermine the authority of these associations by making membership non-mandatory.

"I think the government's attempt to pass a unified law for professional associations is another way of making membership non-obligatory," says Dr. Saeed Abu Meizer.

Abu Ghaida cites many examples of the strong relation between politics and the work of these associations.

"When we ask to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq or Iraq, that means rescuing national industry which was originally established according to our relation with Iraq," he says. "Between a quarter and a half of the factories in Sahab Industrial Estate have been closed down because of the UN sanctions."

As a result, the number of unemployed engineers that increased as a result became

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NCP struggles to overcome internal crises

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

LESS THAN a year after its founding, the National Constitutional Party (NCP) is today fighting for survival. Of the nine parties that merged to form the NCP, only five remain. Ever since its formation, the party has been beset by resignations, both from the rank and file around the country, and by senior party figures.

Today, the situation has become so bad that the party is holding on by the skin of its teeth.

The party has already lost four former general secretaries, who are blaming what they claim to be the unilateral way decisions are made by NCP boss Abdel Hadi Al Majali. But part of the reason for dissatisfaction, observers say, is the fact that the Al Ahd Party, which Majali headed and brought into the merger, now dominates the NCP.



Rawabdeh

"There is no NCP, only Al Ahd, but under a new name," said Talal Al Ramahi, a former general secretary of the centrist Al Wahdaniyya. Al Ramahi resigned his post on the NCP last year.

He says that the major problem lies in the leadership of the party. "We did not elect this leadership and there was no founding conference for the party..."

But Al Majali rejects those who say that the leadership of the party involves only the 27 members of the higher council. The council discusses the issues amongst themselves and only they vote on them. In an angry mood, he says that "democracy is not about sending your resignation to the press while refusing to discuss it with your leadership."

The Star tried to contact NCP officials but they refused to answer questions. Hakam Khair says that he is fed up with the press focusing on the so-called internal problems of the party, and Majali rejected a request for an interview.

But like it or not the party's fortunes are flagging. The heightened feelings that dominated the party when it was first formed is quickly turning sour.

Akef Al Fayez, a prominent

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Letter from Cairo:

Train tourism in Egypt could be the next big thing

By Samir Raafat

CAIRO—The other day, 82 foreign journalists were treated to a first in the long history of railway presence in Egypt. For two full days they traveled by special train

across 600 kilometers of breathtaking desert terrain, from the Libyan and White deserts west of the Nile to the eastern ranges and rocky plateaus east of it. At some point the festive train crossed the Nile at Qena, less than a hundred kilometers north of Luxor, where, not so long ago, those same journalists had sent their gruesome reports on the November 17 massacre in which 58 tourists and four Egyptians lost their lives at the hands of

terrorists.

As it turned out, organizing the train ride was a logistical feat of its own. This was the first time a passenger train was going to run from the Western Desert Oasis of Al Kharga to the Red Sea Port of Safage. And these were not ordinary passengers. They were the representatives of the international Fifth Estate. Approvals and special permits had to be obtained from almost every government department.

First, the ministries of tourism, interior and transport had to give their consent. Then it was for the Antiquities Dept. to be notified since visits to several ancient temples and Roman quarries along the way were on the

itinerary.

As official host, the governors of the New Valley, Luxor and the Red Sea were informed of the visit. All three made cameo appearances as the train passed through their respective regions.

And of course the security apparatus had to be on hand 24 hours. No one was taking any chances.

Lastly, Egypt's flag carrier, Egypt Air, came up with the appropriate number of seats on its twice-a-week flight to al-Kharga Oasis. This entailed replacing the scheduled Boeing 727 with a wide bodied Airbus.

Also in on the act was Egypt's burgeoning private sector. Wagons Lits Egypt, a division of the multinational Accor Group of hotels and caterers, provided five finely



appointed train wagons including one each for a restaurant and bar. The latter was definitely the train's attention-grabber where

"everything must go" free of charge. The Egyptian National Railway (ENR) means-

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Middle Age Crisis

A new phenomenon in Jordan!

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

FEW SCIENTISTS and laymen would contest the notion that, as the years go by and signs of middle age start to show, men and women the world over begin to experience problems, frustrations and limitations. These are primarily related to the natural process of aging, in which one surprisingly may find they no longer can do what once was easy. In addition—and depending on what an individual feels they've accomplished in life—aging is sometimes accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of having little control over one's destiny.

At the March meeting of the United Nations Women's Guild of Jordan, Dr Fadi Haddad, a Jordanian urological surgeon and one of the first to study Middle Age Crisis and its effects on Jordanian society, made clear that, while the phenomenon may seem new to Jordanians, its resultant crises and adverse consequences know no regional boundaries and are as old as time itself.

According to Dr Haddad, "Most men, on reaching the age of 40 experience sharp feelings of age and the nearness of their end. As a result of the crisis, they begin to question the meaning and objectives of life and even wonder why we were created at all." Although Middle Age Crisis grows gradually, recognition of it may come suddenly, and as a shock. Almost without warning, difficulties arise in doing things that used to come easily. Grey hairs appear; one feels tired more

easily than before. Although this decline is natural, it is not a good thing to ignore. The inability to face the reality of aging, or to come upon it unprepared, or to continue on as if nothing has changed, may do more harm than the process of aging itself.

But what, exactly, defines Middle Age Crisis? How does one know if one "has" it? The answer to the first is two-fold: it is characterized by the body's inability to function as efficiently as before, and it involves a person's emotional responses to these very real evidences of aging. As to the second, the following are some common symptoms: anti-social and egotistical behavior, self-pity, quick temper and an overall lukewarm attitude toward life. Other more physical symptoms include ataxia, weak urine stream, weak sight, partial impotence and the general loss of enthusiasm toward bodily and mental activity.

The effects of Middle Age Crisis are as clearly evident in Jordan as there are anywhere. Dr Haddad, the first to bring up the issue in Jordan, conducted a study to identify its effects and impact here. The study reveals that Middle Age Crisis is responsible for many broken homes, divorces and re-marriages in Jordan. It also has profound effects on the local economy, since the depression that accompanies the Crisis inevitably has adverse effects on a worker's productive capacity. In addition, the study noted that those who were experiencing the anxiety of aging usually develop negative attitudes toward everything, and have a ten-

dency to spread these often cynical feelings throughout the community, even though they may not be completely aware that they are doing this.

Realizing that "we all get old" is not enough in wrestling with the effects of Middle Age Crisis, there must be more effective ways of dealing with aging's mysterious arrival and negative effects. There is a Latin proverb that says, *nil nisi divinum stabile est, cuncta funus* (Nothing is permanent unless divine, the rest is smoke). And it's true, no one can change their own destiny but God. Nevertheless, we can at least understand and improve our attitude toward destiny and eventual death even if we can't control it. Feeling frustrated doesn't help, but what else can we do?

Dr Haddad's study identified the causes of the Middle Age Crisis as physical and psychological and the suggestions he offered as to dealing with it involve elements of both.

First and foremost among his recommendations was an awareness of the problem and the importance of drawing public attention to it. Dr Haddad noted that public information and dialogue would be of great help both to those who are experiencing Middle Age Crisis as well as those who are approaching middle age and may not know what to expect. Encouraging those suffering from the syndrome to open up and talk about how they feel about what they've become and what they plan to do about it is often useful.

Bodily and mental stimulation, particularly in the form of exercise and reading,



Middle Age Crisis: the bus still runs, but the passengers are all slowing down

are also essential ways of reducing the depression that often accompanies the aging process.

It should also be said, as Dr Haddad noted, that Middle Age Crisis doesn't have to be a negative experience. While it is defi-

nately a time of change, it should also be thought of as a time of reassessment of one's priorities in life, and an opportunity to redirect one's central efforts toward the goal of continuing to experience a full and meaningful life. ■

Wedding one's way through the marriage game

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house and asks her to find him a bride.

"Sometimes, they want a rich girl, others want her to be educated and come from a conservative family but in almost all cases there is one demand: she must be beautiful; some even ask for a beauty queen," continued Umm Ibrahim, who has already brought together more than 30 couples.

Ahmad, the youngest member of Umm Ibrahim's family, is a newly-wed and praised his mother for her choice of bride.

"I had many love affairs and believed in love, but unfortunately, girls exploit a man's feelings and try to use him."

It was only in the end that Umm Ibrahim managed to convince her son to forget what she termed as the "nonsense he believed in about love" and found him a lucky bride.

"I went to Syria and was betrothed twice, but I left both wives because of differing points of views. Then I came

back to Jordan and after a tiring search, I found the right girl," said Ahmad who explained that in one day he saw eight girls but with no luck.

Nowadays, despite the fact that men and women can meet openly in many places such as schools, universities, or clubs, there are other ways of getting married. In magazines or weekly papers, you find a special space titled "I want a partner" or "Your Second Half."

These are designed especially for those who want to get married in the traditional way. "I used to receive calls, or mail, from men and women expressing their wish to get married. They would tell me what they wanted and I'd publish it in the newspaper," said a journalist from the social department of a weekly newspaper. The journalist gives each applicant a number and keeps his or her information confidential.

"When a man calls me and asks to meet the girl with the printed number and specific-

tions, I arrange a meeting for them in my office," added the journalist. But most of the applicants take this marriage arrangement as a means of entertainment and having fun.

"Serious applicants are highly literate; they hold high degrees and leave their address and numbers so that I can easily reach them," the journalist said, at the same time pointing out that she is against this way of meeting someone.

"Five minutes is not enough to know one another. Even if they decide to get married their union almost certainly won't be a successful one."

PAs defend role as 'national duty'

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the responsibility of the association. Abu Ghaida, who says PA presidents were given

'New beginning' marked

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ren until their legitimate rights on their national soil are realized. "Jordan will continue to shoulder that responsibility until a just and comprehensive peace, that would allow the Palestinians to regain their legitimate rights and dignity after half a century of suffering, is achieved," Prince Hassan said.

Israeli TV said Prince Hassan and Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai discussed joint security issues and the possible sale of Israeli defense equipment to Jordan. Mordechai's media advisor declined to comment. UPI reported.

The Prince's visit to Israel was the first sign of a visible thaw in relations and followed visits to Amman by two high-ranking Israeli ministers this week.

Two days earlier, Prince Hassan met in Amman with Israel's Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky, who signed a trade agreement with his Jordanian counterpart extending provisions of the present accord for another year.

Both sides called for increasing trade, which amounted to \$32 million dollars—not enough to make much of an impact on Jordan's economy, analysts said.

Sharansky's one-day visit to Jordan came just a day after

Israel's Infrastructure and Housing Minister Ariel Sharon visited the Kingdom for talks on water-related issues. He also met with His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan.

Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, but because few benefits have been realized from it, opposition to the treaty is growing among Jordanians.

Jordanian officials say people need to see economic growth.

King Hussein, who returned to Amman after a regional tour that took him to the UAE, Oman and Egypt, also met Sharansky to discuss the implementation of those parts of the 1994 peace treaty that relate to trade.

Jordanian officials complain Israel is not honoring the bargain by allowing more Jordanian goods into Israel and the Palestinian self-ruled territories.

During his joint press conference with Prince Hassan on Tuesday, Netanyahu said Israel was ready to lift trade barriers between Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian areas.

Jordan wants security measures eased on trucks carrying goods into Israel and the West Bank, but Israeli security forces insist security "will not be compromised."

Some Israeli manufacturers have closed their factories in Israel and reopened them in Jordan, to take advantage of Jordan's lower labor costs, but this has triggered protests in Israel, where unemployment is reaching record levels. ■

Tension high after Israelis killing of Palestinians

Continued from page 1

over anybody. They entered the checkpoint normally and then all of sudden all we heard was shooting from three automatic weapons," he said.

The incident came as Crown Prince Hassan was meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv. Monday, Prince Hassan met with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah in a bid to jumpstart the stalled Palestinian-Israeli peace talks. ■

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

Party time!

Every so often a new idea hits the street, not just in Jordan, but all over the world. The idea of a Christian-Muslim political party is not really a novelty. However, when it was first raised last year, it also raised eyebrows not only amongst Muslims, but Christians as well, who failed to appreciate its purpose. And because of the mass public reaction, no sooner had the idea been floated around than it was quickly quashed, in its cradle you might say. However, all this was to change. Early last week, the spokesman of the party plucked up courage and went in for the plunge. Despite the flagging fortunes of political parties in this country, General Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party Tayseer Busheh, who is himself a Muslim, said that the party would become official after two months. He denied accusations that the party is a sectarian one and said that half of the founding members are Muslims.

Russeifa bids farewell to trash dump

Thank goodness for small mercies, or others may simply say its about time, too. The government has decided to shut down the garbage dump in Russeifa which comes under the authority of the Greater Amman Municipality. Officials in the Ministry of the Environment and Rural Affairs said that the dump, which serves Amman and the surrounding areas, should be closed down immediately and be relocated to another uninhabited area. Meanwhile, Lower House Deputy Mansour Sayid Al Din Murad is feeling pleased with himself for raising this "very important issue." He said that both the dump and the "Pepsi pond" are major sources of pollution that affected the lives of the people in the surrounding area. In addition to that, the government at long last wants to find a solution to the "Pepsi pond" which is a major environmental hazard. It now wants to fill it in and turn it into a public park.



Murad

Released!

Twenty nine people were released in the wake of the last Maan riots. It is understood that King Hussein played a pivotal role in their release. There are 28 that are still being detained, but Deputy Prime Minister for Social Services Dr Abdallah Nsour says that they will be released very soon. Meanwhile, head of the Lower House Public Freedoms Committee Deputy Mohammad Al Azydeh said that the committee is to visit prisons in Jowdeh, Birein and Salt to inquire about the conditions of inmates, particularly those that have been arrested following the Maan incidents. He said that the visits are approved by the Minister of Interior Mr Nahir Rasheed.

One student, one vote please!

Strikes, strikes strikes. This week it was the turn of the students at the University of Jordan. About 80 members of the Student Council held a strike outside the University gates in protest of the new directives issued by the Chancellor, Dr Fawzi Gharaibeh, about the coming student elections on 25 March. The students are rejecting out of hand the "one man one vote" system which is being introduced by the Senate. The students say that the system is unfair to them. Meanwhile another potential boiling point has been averted. The six-day hunger strike by three students from the Faculty of Science ended peacefully last week. The students took the drastic action after the University Senate gave them a number of warnings for showing a film about Hamas leader Yaha Ayash, who was killed by the Israelis two years ago. The students were members of the Executive Committee on the Student Council.



Gharaibeh

Private health hiked

The cost of private health care may soon go up. Hospitals in the private health sector are actively thinking about readjusting their fees. Head of the Society for Hospital Owners Dr Mahmoud Al Taher says that that the pricing list for patients has not changed since 1982, and it is therefore necessary to adjust it accordingly so that it would reflect the times. But such a decision will likely affect many in Jordan, as quite a lot of people rely on private health. Will it be taken hands down, we are yet to see.

Dimona triangle

Tens of employees in the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert have developed various forms of cancer according to a study by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The study revealed that 29 people have developed cancer, and there might be more. What should be worrying for Jordan is that Dimona is right on our border. And although there are no verified reports, the Dimona triangle could be very ticky.



His Majesty King Hussein meets Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, Sunday. The two leaders underlined the need to reactivate the peace process and bring the Israeli and Palestinian sides together. Also on the agenda were bilateral relations. The King, who was accompanied on the one-day trip by Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali and top Jordanian officials, had last week visited the UAE, where he met with President Zaid Ibn Sultan Al Nahyan, and Oman where he was guest of Sultan Qaboos Ibn Said. The King is hoping to lead an Arab initiative to revive the peace process and launch dialogue between Iraq and the US, having played a role in defusing the recent crisis between Baghdad and the UN.

Dead Sea marathon makes international run

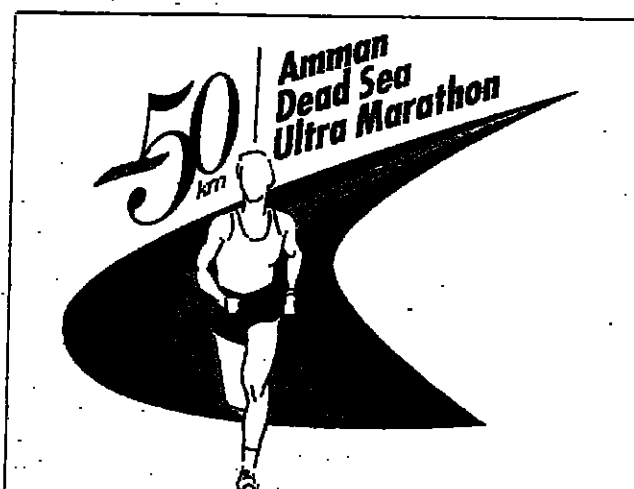
By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star

THE ANNUAL Dead Sea Ultra Marathon, under the patronage of HRH Prince Zaid, has been scheduled this year for 3 April. This event, originally conceived by the Amman Road Runners (ARR), was established to benefit the non-profit Society for Care of Neurological patients (SCNP). Prince Firas, Health Advisor of His Majesty King Hussein and head of the SCNP, held a press conference to announce details about the event.

"The race is designed to attract professional and semi-professional runners from all parts of the world," said Prince Firas, stressing that the Ultra Marathon is becoming more than just a charitable activity to support a non-governmental organization. The organizers hope they will build a lasting tradition.

"We have three aims to fulfill by organizing this event," the Prince noted. "First, it will support a serious and competitive sport; second, the race will help support the SCNP." The third goal is to promote Jordan tourism. "This competition will attract foreign athletes to run to the lowest point on earth, so it will promote an interest in Jordan overseas," Prince Firas added.

The organizing committee is preparing an interesting program for the athletes from outside the Kingdom. Their one week in Jordan will focus on the discovery of some of the most ancient and attractive places in the country. Officials are recommending athletes begin their tour in the ancient sections of the capital city like the citadel and the Roman Theatre downtown in addition to the modern entertainment places like hotels, clubs and commercial centers. From there, the athletes-cum-tourists might continue north to Jerash or south to Petra, Wadi Rum and Aqaba. This one-week formula "may include a visit to Madaba's Church of St.



George and the original mosaic map of the Holy Land, or Mount Nebo—believed to be the tomb of Moses—where marvelous mosaics in the ruins of a 4th–6th century church can be seen."

Back to the race, the Ultra-Marathon will provide a unique experience by running to a "height" of 400 meters below sea level. The race, sponsored by Radisson SAS Hotel Amman and LG Electronics (LGE), is planned for April to ensure good weather conditions for a run of such intensity. The entire course is on paved road, the sun is hot, and there is no shade at all.

According to Prince Firas, the run will begin at 6:30 am from the southern entrance of Amman. The race begins at an altitude of 900 meters above sea level with the temperature hovering around 15 degrees centigrade. Heading south the road is hilly for around 12 kilometers, until the edge of the plateau is reached. Every few 100 meters marks a rise in temperature and a decline in altitude.

This leg of the marathon goes on for approximately 20 kilometers, and ends at an altitude close to 400 meters below sea level with much higher temperatures (average 32 degree centigrade).

By this point in the race, 32 kilometers will have been covered, encompassing an altitude

are reached.

Prince Firas told The Star during the press conference that the advertising campaign overseas had been arranged to attract runners from all over the world. Mr Pascal Hoyez from ARR said that the organizers have sent information packages to appropriate international magazines to advertise the marathon, as well as its attractive locale. "By mail, we sent to running clubs, especially in Britain and Europe; we also established a web-site on the Internet to introduce this competition to the readers of the Net worldwide."

In addition to this, the marathon will receive more media coverage than ever before. A British TV team will prepare a 30 minute report about the Ultra Marathon which will be broadcast internationally. ■



New Red Cross head praises humanitarian work of local chapter

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

THE NEW president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, Norwegian Astrid N. Heiberg, has chosen to start her first official field visit with Jordan. Just a few months after winning the elections as the Federation's first woman president ever, Dr Heiberg planned her visit to the Middle East at a time when an attack against Iraq seemed imminent: because of this, she postponed it. Now that the tension in the region has decreased, she has embarked on the scheduled five-day trip, and arrived in Amman last Monday. It is the first leg of a tour which will take her to Syria and Lebanon as well.

"There are three main reasons why I wanted to start my first official visit as a president of the International Federation, in Jordan," Dr Heiberg said in a speech delivered at a meeting with the president and executive members of the Jordan Red Crescent Society.

"First, I came to thank Dr Hadid as president of the Jordanian Red Crescent Society, and as a friend, for his crucial contribution to the democratization of the election process in the Federation," she underlined. Secondly, having heard so much about the dynamism of the Jordan Red Crescent, she wanted to see for herself how the society functions. The third reason she mentioned is connected to Jordan's key position in the Middle East relative to the tension in the region.

Dr Heiberg expressed much interest in the humanitarian response capabilities of the Jordan Red Crescent to emergency situations. For his part, Dr Hadid emphasized the necessity of creating a disaster fund and a stock of relief items which he said the Jordan Red Crescent should always have at hand.

During her visit to the Jordan Red Crescent hospital and training center for women (mainly young Palestinian and Iraqi refugees), the International Federation's president expressed her satisfaction with the "wonderful work" done in Jordan and stressed the fine example the Jordanian Red Crescent provides for other national societies.

Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarawath hosted a dinner at the Royal Palace for Dr Heiberg, who was accompanied by Dr Hadid and Mr Tony Maryon, the head of the regional office of the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent in Amman. This event was also attended by HRH Princess Basma, and provided an opportunity for an exchange of views about various global and regional humanitarian issues and projects. Dr Heiberg reiterated her appreciation of the Jordan Red Crescent saying it is "a very strong and internationally respected society." Topics concerning women were also discussed by Princess Basma and Dr Heiberg, whose status as the first woman to head the Federation will likely make international women's issues a real priority for the future of the organization. ■

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Train tourism in Egypt could be the next big thing

Continued from page 1

while, provided two (of its 20) brand new locomotives recently imported from Germany.

In Luxor, the journalists and their 26 pax security detail were guests at the century old fully refurbished Winter Palace Hotel (a member of the Accor Group). Dito in the Red Sea. There, the journalists were guests of Al Gouna's promoters, the Sawiris Group. Egypt's industrial-estate tycoons pulled all the stops, winning and dining the fifth estate in their kaleidoscopic resort's luxury hotels: the Movenpick, the Sonesta and the latest kid on the block the Disney-esque Sheraton Miramar.

To be sure, the trip did not lack perks. If press kits were chock full of souvenirs from Swiss chocolates to ash trays and T-shirts, the entire voyage never once lacked in imported wines, spirits and German Lowenbrau. When it was finally time to hop onto the private flight back to Cairo from Al Gouna's tiny airport, it was nothing short of a miracle the Russian and German press corps could still walk a straight line.

But where did it all start? According to Volkhard Windfuhr, the incumbent chairman of the Cairo Foreign Press Association, the train trip first insinuated itself during a recent interview with President Mubarak. An avid train buff, Der Spiegel's Cairo bureau chief popped out the thought on how rail tourism could have a brilliant future in these parts. Train buffs all over Europe and the United States are panting for new routes and destinations. Egypt's abundance of scenic destinations notwithstanding, handled in the right way, this could become a large foreign income generator. And since Egypt was the second country in the world to introduce railways (1858) after the United Kingdom, it is only befitting that train tourism be given due consideration.

The Egyptian president bought it.

The suggestion of train tourism is not new however. During a chance encounter at the Egyptian embassy in Paris, the then-ambassador's outspoken wife, Magda Sidky, asked Egypt's long standing minister

of transport as to the whereabouts of King Farouk's private train coaches. "They're moth-balled in the train depot at Kobbeh Palace," came the reply. As it turned out, these prize coaches have rarely been used following Nasser's departure. Although Sadat preferred helicopters, his train ride from Alexandria to Cairo with Richard Nixon at his side made prime time television all over the world.

"Well, it's time they came out of their big sleep and started earning their keep!" exclaimed a determined Mrs Sidky. A great traveler, she had been on Europe's "Train Corral", "Train Bleu", and the "Orient Express". She knew a good thing when she saw one. Why not do the same in Egypt?

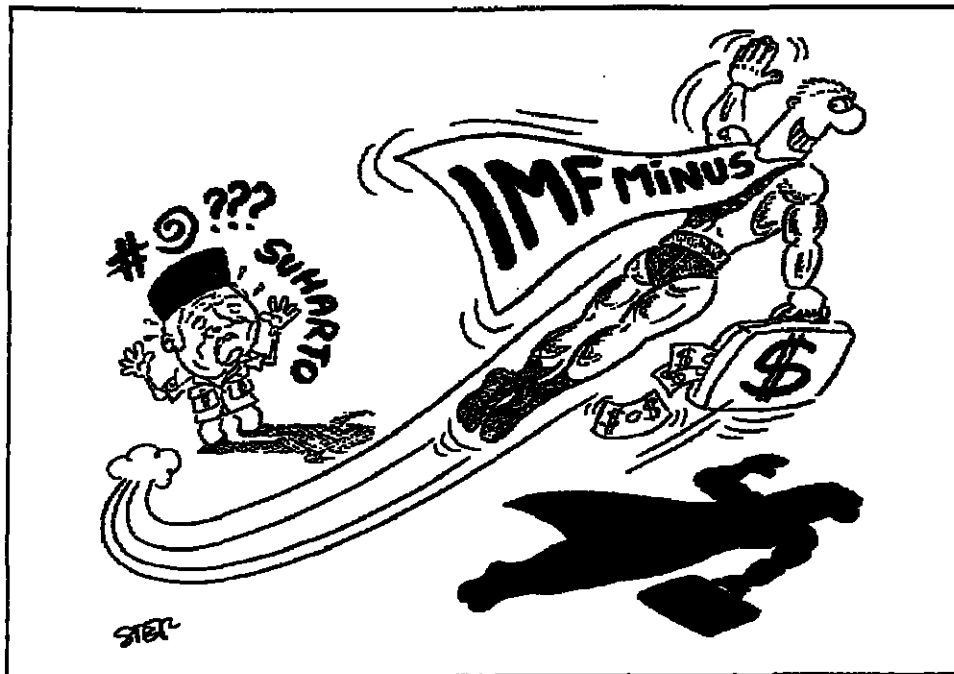
Nothing came out of the well-intended proposal. The minister's mind was elsewhere, perhaps in commuter trains and underground metros. Rail travel in Egypt continued as it had for the last 140 years, the only real tourist ride being the regular 14-hour Cairo-Aswan route and since most of it is during the night, not much there in terms

of scenic views. Seven years after the unfruitful embassy encounter, train tourism may still resurface especially now that serious backroom talk has begun regarding the break up of the state's stranglehold over the country's ailing railway system. The timing for such a change couldn't be better as Egypt embarks on ambitious plans to expand existing rail network as far as Rafah (by fast train) on its north eastern border and to the new Tashkie Valley in Egypt's south western desert.

Yes, indeed, the trainspotter may be coming! ■

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Our Say...

Time for diplomatic efforts

JORDANIAN DIPLOMATIC moves have intensified in recent days following the conclusion of a political deal to end the Iraq-UN crisis thus removing the specter of war from the region. His Majesty King Hussein's Gulf tour, during which he called for a concerted Arab position to deal with the issues of Iraq and the stalemated Middle East peace process, was followed by an important meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Saturday.

The King is heading now to Washington for a summit meeting with US President Bill Clinton. He will be the first Arab leader to visit the US capital since the UN and Iraq agreed to a diplomatic settlement of their dispute, which threatened at one stage to drag the region into a dangerous military confrontation. The King will certainly concentrate on two crucial issues during his talks with American officials: the Middle East peace process and Iraq.

There is every reason to believe that the crisis in the Gulf and the collapse of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will force the United States to review its foreign policy in this region. The United States has emerged shaken and estranged, after weeks of warmongering, from its confrontation with Baghdad. Its Arab allies are now adamant in their call for a diplomatic resolution of the Iraqi crisis. America's Arab allies have made it clear that they will not support military aggression against Iraq, nor are they willing to accept the double-standard approach to the region's problems.

This is why calls for a direct US-Iraqi dialogue warrant support and understanding by all those concerned. Jordan, through King Hussein, can play a constructive role in achieving that goal which promises to close the Gulf War chapter for good and pave the way for a new beginning in US-Iraqi relations based on accepting and honoring UN resolutions and readmitting Iraq into the international community.

On the other hand, the resumption of normal relations between Jordan and Israel, triggered by Crown Prince Hassan's visit to Tel Aviv this week, is again rekindling hope of a revival in the Middle East peace process. America's credibility in the region necessitates a fresh and even-handed approach by Washington to the issues hampering the implementation of commitments made under various Palestinian-Israeli accords.

Jordan has much to gain from a successful implementation of the Oslo Accords and it can play a role in bridging the gap between Israel and the Palestinians and by restoring people's faith in the peace process.

But hopes and good intentions will not suffice. Each of the parties must be willing to make an effort to move the process forward. In the case of Israel, it must convince the Palestinians that it wants to live up to its word by agreeing to a proposed withdrawal scheme and by allowing the Palestinians to go ahead with plans to open the Gaza airport. It must lift trade restrictions between Jordan and the PNA areas and freeze settlement activities. For the United States, it means restoring its shattered credibility and coming back to the people of the region with a new initiative based on the power of a just solution to issues, not the power of aircraft carriers. ■

Annan on Iraqi inspection details

By John M. Goshko
UNITED NATIONS—Secretary General Kofi Annan plans to propose that the ambassadors of the 15 Security Council nations travel to Iraq to see exactly how his agreement for weapons inspections at Iraq's presidential sites is working. The inspections are to begin in about two weeks.

The sources said details of the proposed visit are still being worked out, but that plans will be submitted to the council within the next few days.

Earlier this week, Annan gave the council details governing inspections at the eight presidential sites under the agreement he negotiated in Baghdad two weeks ago with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The procedures devised over the last week at the United Nations for inspecting these sites

appeared to conform to Annan's previous assurances that the agreement does not compromise the UN's ability to conduct complete inspections.

Under Annan's recently negotiated agreement, the presidential sites are to be inspected by a new Special Commission composed of UNSCOM officials and diplomats from UN member states.

The commission is to be led by Jayantha Dhanapala, UN undersecretary general for disarmament, who is responsible for selecting the inspectors. But it reports to Richard Butler, chairman of UNSCOM, who will forward them through Annan to the council.

"The diplomats are there as observers and don't have authority over anything that goes on," said a senior UN spokesperson.

The official said that Dhanapala prefers diplomats already stationed in Iraq, partly to make

surprise inspections possible. But that would not rule out recruiting diplomats from countries which currently have no diplomatic representation in Iraq.

Dhanapala arrived in Baghdad, Wednesday, to begin the groundwork for the inspections.

In a related development, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed Sabhaf began talks with UN officials about implementing a new phase of the agreement under which Iraq can sell oil to obtain money to buy food and medicines.

The Security Council has authorized increasing the amount Iraq can sell to \$5.2 billion every six months, but the Iraqis want a greater relaxation of the restraints under which they must operate. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Balkan conflict threatens to become another Bosnia

By Richard Boudreaux

SCEPAN POLJE, Yugoslavia—Zilfi Halili awoke to predawn gunfire, then heard the heavy thump-thumping of police helicopters close over her village. It was the sound of a new battlefield erupting in the Balkans, just when the region seemed to be calming down. "I saw them circling," she said. "They opened the doors of the helicopters and started shooting."

Halili, 53, reacted as hundreds of thousands of others have across the Balkans in seven years of brutal ethnic warfare. She gathered her two daughters and 24 other women and children from her extended family and set off Thursday on a desperate trek through the forest.

"We just left the house. We didn't take anything with us," said the thin peasant woman, her eyes brimming with tears. "The men stayed to protect our homes." "God help you!" was the last she heard from her husband, or anyone else left behind in the besieged village of Galica.

Halili is an ethnic Albanian in a desolate mountainous area called Kosovo. The helicopters were part of the Serbian government's first major offensive against a budding Albanian separatist insurgency there. The nine-day-long battle represents the West's newest nightmare—a brush fire that could engulf the southern Balkans with the ferocity of another Bosnia.

Forty-five Albanians and six Serbian police were killed in the fighting, by official Serbian count. Kosovo's Albanians say the toll was probably higher from a Serbian blitz that used armored vehicles and heavy artillery to demolish villages of tidy whitewashed houses with tiled roofs, leaving about 5,000 people homeless.

Ethnic Albanians make up 90 percent of the population of Kosovo—a province of Serbia, which is the dominant part of the rump of Yugoslavia. President Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian overlord of Yugoslavia, stripped Kosovo of its autonomous status in 1989 and kept its 2 million people in submission—until recently—with 19,500 heavily equipped police and soldiers.

Now he has a fight on his hands. The emergence of robed guerrillas calling themselves the Kosovo Liberation Army has quickly radicalized the area, undermining the local Albanian leadership's nonviolent path toward a de facto parallel state with its own taxes, schools, hospitals and other institutions.

Milosevic's forces struck hard after four patrolmen were slain in a 27 February guerrilla ambush. The police killed 25 people in a sweep that weekend through Drenica, an unruly vicinity comprising 33 towns and villages where the guerrillas are said to operate. When 30,000 Albanians gathered in protest, police in riot gear dispersed them with clubs, water cannons and tear gas.

The guerrillas appealed Wednesday for military-age Albanians to join their ranks and avenge the killings. Unidentified gunmen sprayed a police station with gunfire that night, wounding two officers and setting off an even bigger Serbian assault on Drenica—the same assault that drove Halili and her large family into the woods.

That offensive wound up Sunday with Serbian forces in control of two near-deserted villages, Donji Prekaz and Lausa, their apparent targets. Journalists escorted through the vicinity by bus said that about half of the 50 homes in Donji Prekaz had been heavily damaged or destroyed.

Among them were family compounds belonging to Adem Jashari and Bajram Lustaku. Serbian television identified the two men as senior guerrilla leaders and said they were killed in the assault. Police said they also found four underground bunkers—one storing machine guns and grenades and two others containing beds, operating tables and medical supplies.

The operation to liquidate the heart of Kosovo terrorism has ended, Veljko Daljevic, the Serbian deputy chief of Kosovo province, said Sunday. But few in Kosovo believed the guerrillas were defeated, and police, manning sandbagged junctions kept the area sealed off.

International observers say they are disturbed by parallels here with the war in

Bosnia-Herzegovina, which ended in November 1995, and by the delayed fallout of a civil war that racked neighboring Albania in the first half of 1997.

"This is ultimately a very, very scary scenario," said Kris Janowski, a spokesman in Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, for the Geneva-based UN refugee agency. "We are alarmed because we have seen it all before."

There were widespread reports last week of wholesale Serbian attacks on civilians, some carried out by the same black-clad paramilitary Interior Ministry troops that employed such tactics in Bosnia. Among those killed in Kosovo were 10 men of the Ahmeti clan, aged 16 to 50, who, according to surviving relatives, surrendered to police at their family compound in Likosani and were taken away alive. Their bodies turned up at a morgue.

Ibrahim Rugova, the moderate elected leader of the Kosovo Albanians' shadow government, said the police assault was part of an "ethnic cleansing" campaign to rid Kosovo of non-Serbs.

Western leaders have been pushing Milosevic to negotiate Rugova's demands for autonomy—to no avail. The Yugoslav president made his refusal doubly clear by unleashing the police in Kosovo the same day he was receiving British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook in Belgrade. Kosovo's future is a purely Yugoslav matter, Milosevic lectured him.

Alarmed by the assault, the United States will press its European allies for punitive measures against Milosevic's regime at a meeting in London Monday of the six-nation Contact Group on the former Yugoslav federation, but opposition from Russia is expected to dilute any response.

Observers in Yugoslavia wonder whether anyone—Milosevic, Rugova or any foreign government—can control events in Kosovo now. The fledgling guerrilla army, recently estimated to number 200 fighters, is being fed by Serbian repression, financial contributors in the Albanian diaspora and tens of thousands of guns that have made their way to Kosovo from Communist-era stockpiles in Albania since the conflict there.

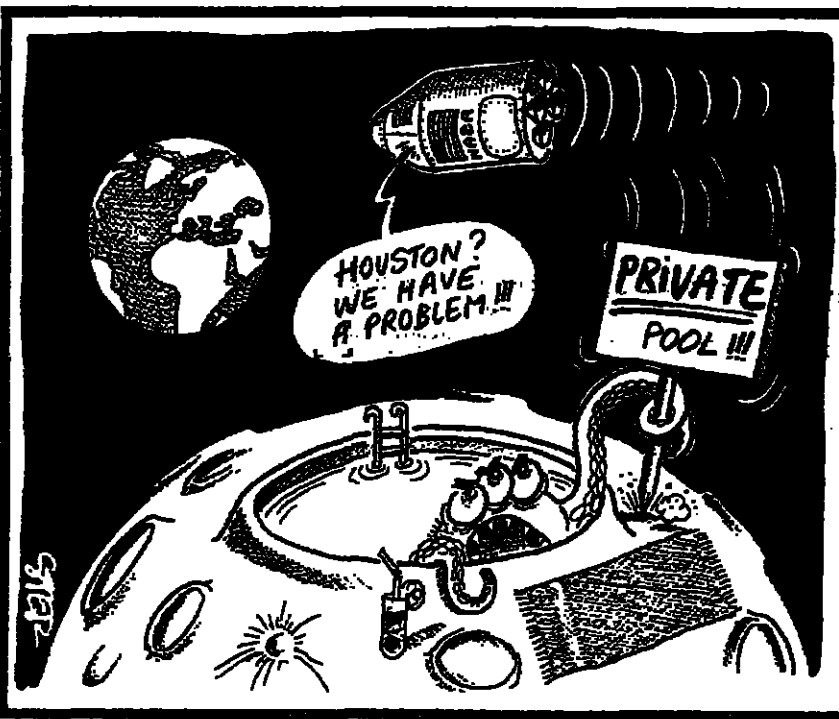
"We have all the preconditions for a civil war—long, bloody and with an outcome that will certainly be unfavorable for the Serbian authorities," Milos Vasic, a liberal, independent commentator, wrote last week in the Belgrade magazine Vreme.

While little is known of the guerrilla group and less about its losses in the past week, the police assault could further weaken the unpopular Rugova's nonviolent leadership and prompt more Albanians to take up arms, said Baton Haxhiu, editor of Kosovo's independent Albanian-language newspaper, *Koha Ditore*.

"Politics is dead in Kosovo. The only politics in Kosovo is the (Kosovo Liberation Army)," he said. "There is no way back after these events in Drenica."

A bigger fear is that low-intensity combat will spread from Kosovo to neighboring Macedonia, which has a sizable Albanian minority and a Kosovo Liberation Army presence. If that happened, analysts warn, neighboring states such as Serbia and Albania, but also Greece, Bulgaria and even Turkey, might be drawn into a tit-for-tat struggle, again plunging the Balkans into a major war. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



The Middle East peace process

A South African perspective

By Aziz Pahad

THE SOUTH African Government has consistently and enthusiastically supported the Middle East Peace Process since its inception.

Indeed, South Africa continues unwavering in its conviction that only through peace will countries in the Middle East achieve their full potential and thereby attain the prosperity which their peoples deserve, and which we desire for them.

It is for this reason that South Africa perceives the Middle East Peace Process to be the single most important development in the region currently and we will actively continue to encourage all countries to pledge their fullest commitment to this process.

This said however, South Africa will not stand by mute when we perceive that the actions of any of the parties to this historic process stand in blatant discord with the letter or spirit of commitments made in terms of the peace process, or when the unilateral actions of one party are universally perceived to prompt the creation of circumstances which potentially can have no other result than negative consequences which are predictable and indeed, inevitable.

In recent months the Government of Israel has publicly suggested that they are being unfairly singled out for criticism and condemnation at a time when they are indeed moving forward "seriously" with the implementation of their commitments defined by the Oslo Process.

There is however, a serious measure of disingenuousness inherent in such a statement, as it carries with it the suggestion that at a time when Israel is taking great risks with its security in order to meet its

Peace Process obligations, the international community is rallying to support its opponents.

Such a suggestion is nothing more than a distortion of the truth by those who would like to create the impression that the international community is on the march once again to isolate Israel for reasons of global political expediency, or because of a perceived desire to destroy the Israeli state.

Indeed, let the record on this matter be clear. At a time—not so far distant—when Israel was seriously pursuing peace with its neighbours, the world heat a path to her door. The massive expansion in Israel's diplomatic representation since the start of the Madrid and Oslo Processes is tangible proof of this.

What more reminder need be given than the expression of international solidarity with those who support the cause of peace in Israel than the gathering in November 1995 in Jerusalem, which Deputy President Mbeki attended together with 120 of the world's leaders, to join that nation's people in laying to rest the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who quite literally gave his life in the pursuit of peace. This international demonstration of support to a nation and man who made a sacrifice for the cause of peace is a powerful statement of rejection to those who would turn to violence to try and stop the cause of peace.

South Africa's answer to these faceless men of violence was the commitment of our leaders to redouble their efforts to achieve peace and, against all odds, we succeeded. This is our hope for the Middle East. At the same time, it must be understood clearly by the government in Israel, that the world has expectations of it. The present Government's

predecessors demonstrated a steadfastness to stay the course and to take risks for peace. They built and nurtured mutual trust and respect and treated their peace partners with esteem, regard and consistency.

For the past year-and-a-half, however, the present Israeli Government has adopted another course. A zig-zag policy in which Jerusalem moves from implementation of Oslo Process commitments to short term pandering to extremist constituencies for narrow domestic political advantage. A policy which is as insulting to Israel's peace partners as it is dangerous to the good health of the peace process and therefore to Israel's long term security.

Instead of accepting that the Netanyahu Government's own ill-advised and inconsistent policies, which have so poisoned the underlying foundations of trust so necessary to building peace, contributed directly to the climate of incipient violence now prevailing, Israeli spokesmen have retreated to the expedient of blaming their peace partners. The Palestinians are accused of giving the "green light" to terrorist bombers, while at the same time the Israeli Government orders hit squads to assassinate political opponents in the capital of Jordan.

The lack of understanding for the negative consequences of its ill-conceived and inconsistent policies is precisely the reason why Israel stands so roundly condemned by the international community. It is also the reason for the ringing criticism of Israel's currently most consistent peace process interlocutor, King Hussein of Jordan, who has asked Israel's current leaders why they seem bent on destroying all that he believes in and are deliberately humiliating their Palestinian peace partners. Our own experience and the

ethos of our society demands no less. Our criticism of the Israeli Government is predicated not upon hostility towards Israel, but purely upon our own analysis. This analysis is also shared by 135 members of the UN General Assembly who during 1997 voted in favour of two Emergency Special Session Resolutions of the General Assembly which condemned Israeli action whose sole effect was to harm the core foundations upon which the peace process had been built so successfully since September 1993.

There is, we believe, no alternative to peace, and it is only through perseverance and through commitment to honest negotiation that the Middle East peace process can come to fruition. The realisation of such a peace will not only impact on the countries of the region, but inevitably also on the world as a whole. We therefore urge that the Israeli government does all in its power to avoid actions calculated to undermine the achievement of this goal, and to demonstrate in practice, its stated commitment to peace.

In this regard, we believe strongly that it would be futile and dangerous to re-write or reinterpret the Oslo Agreements in a manner which seeks to move this agreement away from the carefully crafted foundations laid down by the accord's architects. The stability, security and development of the entire region will be guaranteed by the principle of "Land for Peace" rather than the present Israeli Government's stated position of "Peace for Security."

(The writer is Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for South Africa. The piece is excerpted from an article that appeared in the Johannesburg-based Sunday Times)

Kosovo

THOUGH IT may seem strange to write about Kosovo in this column, there are as yet no adequate regional definitions that describe a country or an area in exclusive terms. The interconnection between politics and geography in this epoch has eliminated most demarcation lines between disciplines and nations.

But perhaps in the context of geo-politics many things are permissible. Just as the historical lands of Bosnia have seen many Islamic Ottoman victories, and many Slavic victories, so the lands of Kosovo have also experienced a similar share of history.

From the historical defeat of the Serbs and Bulgars at the hands of the Ottomans in the 13th century, and later, the Hungarians in the 14th, and the stabbing to death of Sultan Murad I by a Serb before the first battle of Kosovo—a historical precedence for the much later assassination of Francis Ferdinand prior to World War I—as the hands of a Serb—the notion of Kosovo being the cradle of Serbian culture has emerged in the image of a gateway that ought to be defended.

In the earlier conflict in Bosnia, the Muslims were referred to as Turks, and now, in yet another impending ethnic cleansing, they are called Albanians; the common denominator is that the majority of both peoples is Muslim.

The Bosnian leadership tried to warn the international community, including the Islamic world, about the fate that was awaiting the Muslims of Bosnia, but no one reacted until the first few thousand men, women and children were mercilessly massacred. And even then, it was with reluctance that the international community came to condemnations and a facade of sanctions, while the Arab and Islamic worlds continued to debate to what degree the Bosnians are Islamic, right down to the last percentage point.

At this juncture, one may not wish to open old wounds and inflame stale hatreds. Yet the irony of the situation is that the Kosovan leadership recently has done exactly that, and warned the whole world of things to come.

Again, the wall of silence remained until news of the first massacres filtered out to the indifference of major western powers and a complacent Islamic world. In their attempts to clean up their perceived image, the Islamic countries have chained themselves to the notion of *Mus Culpas* as far as terrorism is concerned, though one confesses that some fringe Muslim groups are the worst image advocates of Islam. Yet that should not make Muslims feel so embarrassed of their impotence to the extent of their wishing the Kosovans to surrender to their fate, rather than rock the towers of illusion.

Many say, legitimately enough, that there are no solutions to such issues, and that we have to contend with containing such current and future conflicts before they spread to neighboring regions and countries. In the meantime, some humanitarian relief effort could be organized. This is almost the case now. Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria are very worried about this conflict, and everyone is watching Macedonia, which has a large Albanian community, and looks to be the next killing field, with the possible involvement this time of these same three countries.

Instead of setting up some conflict prevention groups and conflict limitation bodies to avoid a flare up in Macedonia, as well as attempting to solve the Kosovan crisis, everyone is hoping for the best, of course, without setting up contingency plans in case of the worst. If the whole world is not interested in such issues, then perhaps those who are should get together and create conflict prevention and resolution agencies and humanitarian task forces based on potential trouble spots, according to the imperatives of geo-politics. ■

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Business scene

■ Jordan Dairy Co. recorded better results in 1997 compared with 1996. Its net profit last year was about JD 947,000, which shows a rise of 50% compared with the former year's earnings. The company's board recommended that JD 487,000 in dividends be distributed among shareholders. Fiscal figures on the company's activities revealed that its sales stood at JD 7.1 million in 1997, an increase of 15% compared with sales in 1996. The company, which was established in 1968, operates on a capital of JD 1.75 million.

■ The government is going ahead with its plan to sell its shares in the Jordan Telecommunication Co. (JTC) in compliance with its strategy to run other companies on commercial basis and privatizing of public corporations. Offers are being submitted by four companies—American, British, Italian and Greek—to win the JTC shares offered for sale. 40% of the company's capital. The strategic partner should have a wide experience in telecommunication and abide by government conditions. The deadline to receive offers is one month after submitting bids.

■ Latest official statistics revealed that about 460,000 cheques bounced last year compared with 446,800 in 1996. However, their value decreased from JD 442.2 million in 1996 to JD 434.7 million last year. The number of cheques cleared by the Central Bank of Jordan was 8,617,500 last year against 8,645,200 cheques in 1996. Their values were JD 10,827,700 and JD 10,845,500 respectively.

■ The Islamic Development Bank is to grant Jordan \$44.5 million in grants and aid according to an agreement signed at the Ministry of Planning. About \$43.5 million of this is in the form of loans while \$650 thousand is given as grants. The purpose of these is to finance development projects. All in all five agreements were signed.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 11 MARCH

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFR	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Local company sets new storage safety measures

By Iham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

SINCE THEIR establishment, free zones stressed three main commercial activities: manufacturing, trade and storage. The last is given special emphasis because it requires a lot of safety measures to guarantee the secure storing of goods; however, it mostly applies to warehouses used to store chemicals and flammable items, where precautions are needed to minimize or even avoid accidents.

It was with this in mind that the Safe Square Co. (SSC), was established at the Zangia Free Zone in early 1997. "The idea of our company came after the big fire in this zone which led to many losses," says Nofal Khasawneh, deputy general director of the company. The reason behind this—and similar—fires was that "warehouses storing flammable materials did not abide to general safety rules on storage. The merchants who stored their goods there have suffered heavy losses because the insurance on stored items amounts to no more than

30 percent of their real value.

In response to this problem, the Free Zone Corp. thought of establishing a special warehouse for chemical or flammable items that easily explode or are dangerous. Any merchant willing to store his goods in warehouses built by the company for that purpose have to pay 30 percent of the tariff imposed by the government, while the Free Zone Corp. bears the rest of the expenses. "Our fees are very low, at an average of 100 fils per ton per day," Mr Khasawneh notes.

The first of its kind in all the free zones in Jordan, the Safe Square Co. made stringent measures in its installations and buildings to face any emergency in future.

"We have introduced automatic extinguishing systems, including water sprinklers, fire-plugs, or hydrants, hose reels and smoke and fire detectors," Mr. Khasawneh continues. Moreover, the company has water tanks containing 112 square metres of water, equipped with pumps that operate on either electricity or diesel. Other precautionary measures

include warehouse floors made of safer material, and procedures to avoid chemical interaction.

The storage process is handled in a way that organizes stored items on metal shelves and separated from other sensitive materials. The Company is also equipped with a special refrigerated room for storing chemical items used in pharmaceuticals and food preservative materials.

The load and discharge to and from the warehouse is done with electrical devices to avoid the hazard of other fires or other accidents. Also, a special tightly-blocked manhole is linked to the warehouse to prevent any chemical from accidentally entering the sewage system. The factor of healthy ventilation inside the warehouse also has been given much attention by the designers of the warehouses.

Seeking to maintain continuous supervision and control over its facilities, Safe Square has hired special guards who keep their eye on the project's installations and warehouses to make sure that all safety measures

are operating and in good repair. The company's employees wear a special overall made of a material that protects the body from the effects of chemicals. They also wear helmets and special masks.

Referring to the technique used in storage, Mr Khasawneh explains that storage is done on the computer. Each chemical item has its trade name and scientific description (United Nations Number), and "if we receive any material for storage, we just refer to its number and the computer provides us with the requirements on how to store and handle it, as well as to what to do if there is leakage or fire."

The company is also prepared to cover possible accidents in emergency cases. "We have given much care to insurance. Of course the warehouse is covered by an insurance policy, but in the case of the insurance on items stored in Safe Square warehouses, the sum of the policy goes up as the value if the insured material increases."

Safe Square Co., whose capital comprises JD one million, is



Khasawneh

ambitious to execute the second and third phases of its project in total covering about 12.5 dunums. It has already completed the first phase, which covers 2000 square metres for the warehouses and another 700 metres for umbrellas storing solid material and volatile chemicals.

The company plans to open branches in other free zones in Jordan.

Six Continents Club scoops major international award

THE WORLD'S longest running hotel guest recognition programme, InterContinental's Six Continents Club, has scooped three prestigious international Freddie Awards as voted by 20,000 worldwide readers of *Inside Flyer* magazine. The Six Continents Club has been recognized with having the Best Elite-Level program, Best Member Newsletter, and Best Member Website. The Six Continents Club also received third place for Best Customer Service.

"Winning these prestigious awards from the worldwide readers of *Inside Flyer* is an enormous compliment" said Dorothea Roemer, vice president of the Six Continents Club. "We strongly believe that the driving force behind the Six Continents Club is its ability to consistently deliver an unique range of benefits and rewards that our loyal members so richly deserve. To come first in the categories of Best Elite Program, Best Newsletter and Best Website is a great compliment as this is an endorsement from our member around the world."

With more than 110,000 active member from over 200 countries around the globe, the six continents Club has been setting industry standards for more than 30 years. As a result of ongoing customer and member research, the Club was relaunched just last year with further member enhancements including a complimentary weekend night certificate on enrolment and renewal. The relaunch also included a new membership level—the Six Continents Club Ambassador Card—developed to recognize and reward InterContinental's most loyal guests.

To make joining the world's longest running hotel loyalty program even easier, the company introduced on-line internet enrolment, membership renewal and the ability to update member profiles on InterContinental's website <http://www.interconl.com>.

Since its launch in March 1997, on-line membership enrolment are increasing up to 800 percent monthly. The InterContinental website also features the latest special offers exclusive to Six Continents Club members, newsletter highlights and useful information on member services and facilities such as those hotels offering a dedicated Six Continents Club airport chauffeur service. Members can also take advantage of InterContinental's secure on-line hotel bookings service upon entering membership number and credit card details.

BritishBank open its doors in Ramallah

BRITISHBANK announced the opening of a new branch in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The Bank will offer a comprehensive range of personal and corporate banking services fully supported by its parent company, the HSBC Group.

The branch opened for business on 8 February 1998 following approval from the Palestine Monetary Authority. It is conveniently located between the industrial and main downtown areas of Ramallah. Branch Manager Anton Loias said, "BritishBank is now in a position to offer a wide range of modern banking services including personal banking products such as MasterCard and international ATM services to residents of the West Bank. It is the Bank's goal to provide customers with the highest quality service and tailored products to meet their needs."

Mr John Pascoe, Chief Executive Officer, commented, "We are delighted to have the opportunity to contribute to the development and progress of Ramallah. The new branch illustrates BritishBank's ongoing commitment to serve our customers throughout the Middle East."

Petra Aluminum

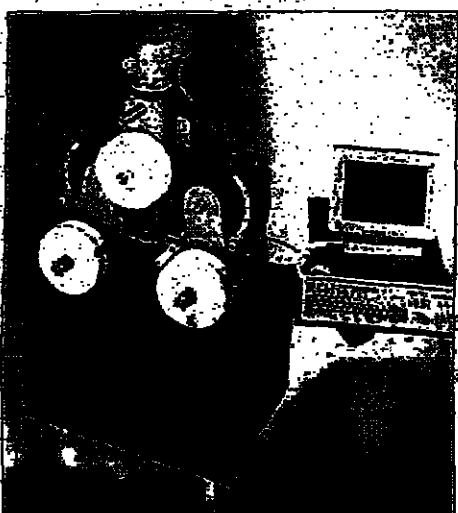
Modern engineering gets high marks

AMMAN (Star)—The Petra Aluminium Co. has succeeded in improving its output by boosting its productive capacity and operating new production lines to the local and Arab markets.

The company, established in 1956, has expanded its new factory to extend over an area of 6900 square metres, compared with its previous size of only 1500 square metres. It also has introduced a number of high-tech items, including curtain walls, aluminium cutters, compressors, pneumatic presses, automatic milking and copy machines.

The company is currently offering its new windows slide fastener system "Zeus," as well as its Petra section, which was introduced to Jordanian markets in 1985.

Petra section has recorded the highest sales since then, for its unique isolation specifications. "Zeus" system was mainly produced to be easily applied



to windows and doors. This guarantees the advantage of a duplex glass vacuum section. What makes "Zeus" distinguished is that it is designed in a way that allows easy installation of many leaves.

The company is also keen to utilize the latest systems' specifications in the field of curtain wall and structural glass.

It has already finished the Housing Bank complex project in Irbid, by using the technique of reinforced curtain walls.

This project is the biggest of its kind introduced by a Jordanian company.

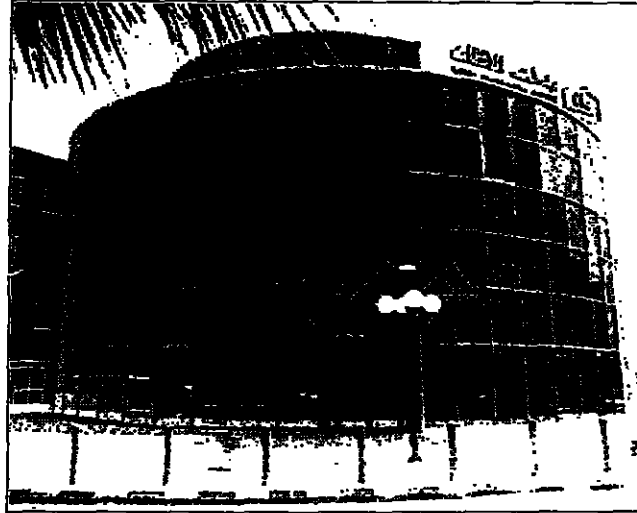
Another project was executed along the Airport Road covering an area of 1600 square meters by using structural glasswalls.

Petra Aluminium has purchased all needed equipment and instruments for installing structural glass walls, including silicon machines designed for this type of application in co-operation with the United Isolated Glass Manufacturing Company.

In this regard, the company has concluded an agreement with the German-based company Alucobond, which specializes in manufacturing isolated aluminium sheets, commonly used in structural cladding. One building is already underway, covering an area of nearly 4000 square meters.

Petra Aluminium is currently operating as an agent for the Italian-based Equipped, which specializes in producing aluminium and wooden curtains, commonly designed for villas and palaces.

It has already imported machinery for the production line in addition to profiles. Technicians in the factory are also being trained to



operate effectively in order to enable the company to meet local needs as well as cover the needs of Arab markets.

"For installing the internal and external doors' systems,

Petra Aluminium has agreed with Stanley Door System International to install internal steel doors and fiberglass entrance doors, in addition to remote control sectional doors."

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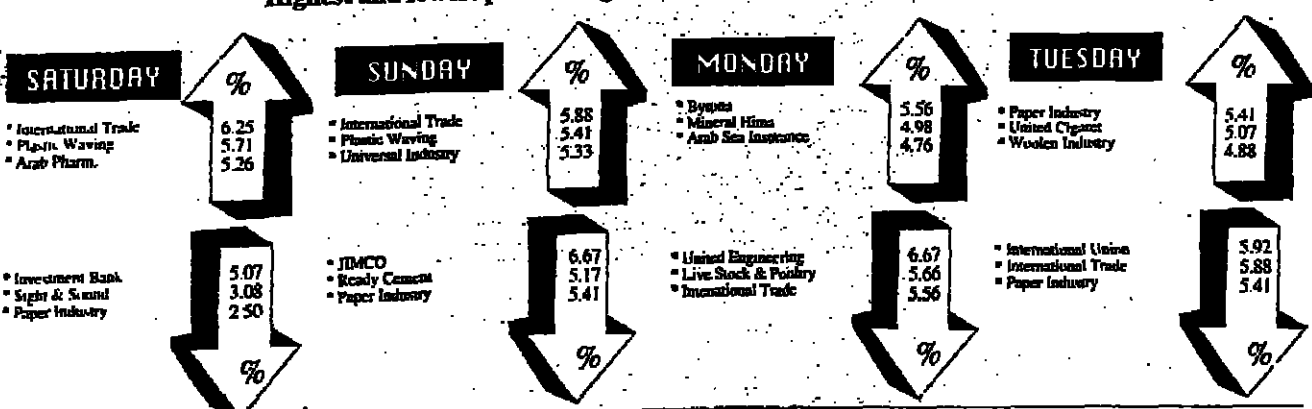
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Kawar and Sons see more ships on the horizon

By Uham Sadiq
Star Staff Writer

AMIN KAWAR and Sons Company has over 43 years of experience in the shipping industry and has shown itself to be highly professional in its diverse approach to the field.

The history of the company goes back to well-known founder Amin Kawar who discovered phosphate minerals in Jordan in 1935.

The late Mr. Amin left behind the Orient Trading and Engineering Co. which was later re-registered by his son Tawfiq as Amin Kawar and Sons Co. (AKS), with the objective of providing shipping and related services.

Mr. Tawfiq, presently the chairman and managing director of the company, established contacts with shipping agents who exported phosphates out of Beirut to Europe. Yet, he realized the need to provide shipping services at Aqaba port.

Over its long history, Amin-Kawar & Sons, has introduced a wide variety of shipping lines to Aqaba from countries in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the US and South-East Asia.

This contributed to the expansion of Aqaba port as a shipping center, and in part because of this, Amin-Kawar & Sons now ranks among the leading privately owned companies in Jordan.

"Our activities are diverse, and include shipping, insurance, forwarding, travel and tourism, cargo, ship brokerage for big companies (such as the phosphate industry) and land and sea transport," said assistant general manager, Mr. Amin Kawar. They are also agents for the Pacific International Line (PIC) which is the direct shipping line from the Far East to Aqaba.

The liner division performs many functions, handling all types of cargo including container, conventional, Ro-Ro, liquid bulk and reefer.

He elaborated that the company is proud to be the first shipping agent to receive, from Lloyds, the ISO 9002 certification for the high standard quality of service offered by all branches of the company.

Since its establishment in 1995, AKS has served renowned lines arriving in Aqaba; it also operates as an agent for prominent ship owners. It is committed to providing prompt and efficient service, and because of this, has made sound ties with its

"The last is the sole line which did not stop operating its regular weekly trips from the Far East to Aqaba after the second Gulf war," Mr. Kawar added.

Mr. Kawar refers to the importance of Aqaba port in the light of latest develop-

growth in the number of containers, which is good, the bulk exports are growing as well, and the number of cruise ships is also on the rise.

"In light of new AKS projects to expand Aqaba port and carry out other fertilizer and phosphate projects, the port appears to be heading into a new and prosperous era that will reflect positively on the country's economy," Mr. Kawar emphasized.

Speaking on the future prospects for the shipping industry, Mr. Kawar confirmed that the number of cruise ships will increase as will the size of container and bulk cargoes, while general cargo numbers will remain stable.

AKS shipping division operates as agents for tramp vessels and internationally renowned trading houses for the shipments of sugar, rice, wheat, sulphur, vegetable oil and frozen products as well as other bulk cargoes.

The company, with its highly qualified dedicated staff, offers the client a wide range of services: claims handling, cargo surveys, freight forwarding, brokerage, air cargo, travel and tourism. AKS represents most internationally recognized classification societies including Lloyd's Register of Shipping, Germanischer Lloyd, Nippon Nauti, the American Bureau of Shipping, and Bureau Veritas.

Its marketing staff provides extensive marketing support, ensuring regular bookings of cargo, reverse canvassing and the promotion of import and export services.

In recent years, AKS has expanded its expertise well beyond Aqaba port to include Egypt, Romania, Lebanon, Iraq and the Palestinian territories.

One of the Kawar Group's fastest growing ventures is its expansion into the high technology market in Jordan with the establishment of Ideal Systems Company.

Founded in 1987, Ideal Systems is distinguished by its service-oriented approach, emphasizing sales support, maintenance and systems training.



clients. The head office in Amman cooperates with its branch in Aqaba which acts as a liaison with the port's Corporation and Customs Department in order to secure proper and timely handling of cargo to the consigned.

"We also have sister companies such as the Red Sea Shipping Co, Aqaba Shipping Co (which represents Maersk, the biggest container line in the world, which calls at Aqaba weekly) and the United Ro-Ro Shipping Agency.

ments. "I feel that it will see real growth, but it will be difficult to restore the prosperity it enjoyed in the 1980s."

Depending on Iraq in the marine transport sector is not likely to yield an increase in business, since Iraq is currently attempting to improve and use its own national ports.

Nevertheless, Mr. Kawar said that the status quo of shipping activity in Jordan is maintaining its expected levels, and, in addition, some branches of this industry are growing. "There is 95%

Removing routine enhances port activity

By Uham Sadiq
Star Staff Writer

NATIONAL SHIPPING agents play a significant role in supporting Jordan's external trade and enhancing marine transport activity in the country. They attempt to improve, diversify and boost their services and in general, promote Aqaba port as an efficient and attractive point for transit cargo.

In 1997, agents handled import/export matters involving 1507 cargo vessels arriving at Aqaba. They also docked and serviced 103 cruise ships, as well as other vessels organizing passenger trips between Aqaba and Nuweiba.

Referring to the shipping scene in Jordan, the manager of Shipping Agents Association (SAA), Mr. Sufian Al-Muhaisen said, "This sector is maintaining realistic growth in terms of activity because there is a satisfactory increase in the volume of cargo arriving through Aqaba port."

"If we compare the situation of Aqaba port today with that when the commercial activity of the port began in 1952, we would see significant growth," Mr. Al-Muhaisen added.

He then pointed to an important issue concerning claims by some investors that the shipping industry is in recession. "I disagree. I believe that the marine transport sector is receiving through Aqaba a volume of cargo reflecting the actual size

and real needs of Jordan."

The movement through Aqaba port flourished tremendously in the 1980s mainly with Iraq. During the first Gulf War between Iran and Iraq, the latter would import and export most of its products through Aqaba, the main reason for the noticeable growth of the port during that time.

No sooner had the war with Iran ended than Iraq thought to improve such national ports of her own as Um Qasir. Since that time, no oil shipments have been routed through Aqaba.

In addition, the latest crisis between Iraq and the US has cast its shadow on the area.

Many investors and importers, thinking war was imminent, imported and stored large quantities of goods, hoping to sell them later, during the war, at a higher price. With the recent ease of tensions, and without a war, they found that they could not sell their cargo, and complained that the situation was stagnant.

Clearly, it is illogical to depend on only one market to promote our commodities, even though the matter of economic interests is often politicized. "If we want to get transit shipment either from Iraq or any other country, we have to concentrate on the economic aspects of the situation; this being the case, why is it we always treat the Iraqi market as our right?" Mr. Muhaisen wondered.

Aqaba port is well-known for its unique productive capacity (load and discharge) and the

attractively low fees for services imposed on vessels and cargo.

The Association plays an important role in operating as a liaison between shipping agents and official agencies, including port authorities and customs and free zones officials.

"It is our task to improve the competence of marine transport in Jordan and activating movement to and from Aqaba is the way to achieve it," Mr. Muhaisen maintained.

He elaborated that this should include creating an attractive business environment by way of appropriate legislation, tariff taxes and other technical aspects related to facilities at the port.

The Association's task is mainly targeted at making the freight process easier for both the shipper and the consignee.

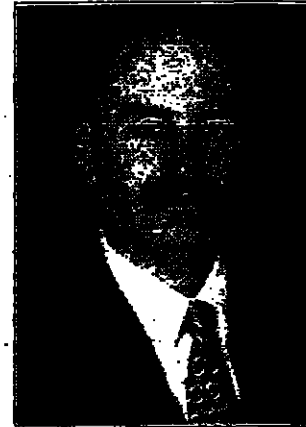
"I would like to point out the importance of the role the shipping agent plays in protecting the rights of parties involved in the commercial aspect of the deal, the bank (where a letter of credit must be opened to cover the price of the cargo), the carrier and the importer," he said.

This means that the cargo won't leave port until the agent issues delivery permission based on guarantees that the rights of the three parties are protected. Mr. Muhaisen stressed the importance of this role when the value of the ship's cargo is very high.

Available statistics show that the number of ships arriving at Aqaba is increasing. But between 1990 and 1997 the actual tonnage of goods decreased.

Mr. Muhaisen explained that such a phenomenon doesn't mean that the shipping sector is in recession. He attributed it to the rise in the number of cruise ships, which has increased from 30 four years ago, to last year's 103.

Also, allowing the private sector to import foodstuff items such as sugar and rice caused the



Muhaisen

tonnage of steamers to drop.

"Before, the Ministry of Supply used to import, for example, about 15,000 tons of supplies on one ship, while private companies could not because of the expense of such high tonnage."

"So, let's say every company imported 2000, 3000 tons on one ship. This led to a rise in the number of ships while the imports also did not stop, but rather were divided among private importers."

"This has positively reflected on the dividends taken by the port on the ships arriving at Aqaba and thus is promising for higher revenues," Mr. Muhaisen explained.

Also, Iraq exported its oil through Aqaba until 1989. The load of an giant oil tanker was about 100,000 tons. "Since then, no vessel has arrived at Aqaba with so large a load," Mr. Muhaisen noted.

Imported cargo at Aqaba last year reached about 4.8 million tons and included rice, sugar, frozen meat and fish, raw materials, oil liquid and bulk chemicals.

Jordanian exports via the port were about 7.5 million tons last year including transit shipments. These exports cover cement shipment, in addition to potash, phosphate and fertilizers. Full containers discharged at Aqaba comprised 73,000 TEUs (twenty equivalent unit) in 1997; while export containers were about 20,000 TEUs.

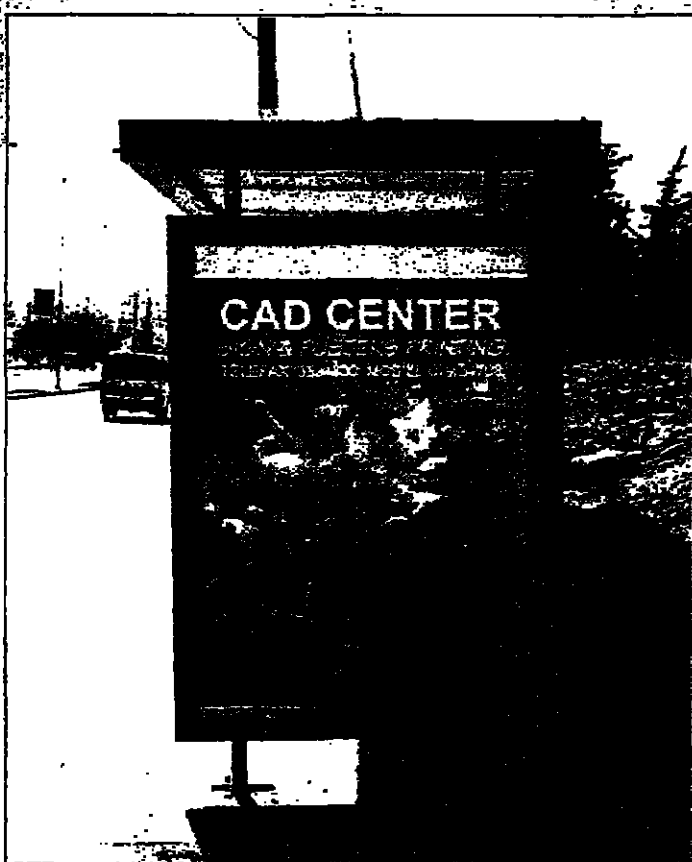


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مطعمنا الجديد

Riding a high wave

Shipping line turn around improves Aqaba prospects

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

IN LIGHT of the latest political developments in the region, the shipping industry is expected to realize an increase in business. This naturally means that cargo transport trade will flourish in Aqaba and it equally promises good yields for shipping line operators.

Referring to available indicators for this expected boost, Mr Remon Suleiman, general manager of T Gargour & Fils (TGF) told *The Star* that the shipping sector, encouraged by the latest ease in tensions between Iraq and the United States, expects a future that will see its former levels of prosperity restored.

Before the Iraq-Annan deal, there were talks about a proposed rise in Iraqi oil sales in light of the oil-for-food deal concluded between Iraq and the UN and renewed every six months. "If such a proposal is approved then this will automatically reflect positively on the number and movement of ships in Aqaba port," Mr Suleiman said.

Currently Aqaba is given priority by Iraq to receive its shipments of humanitarian aid approved in line with the oil-for-food deal; in addition Aqaba handles distribution of such goods as wheat, foodstuffs and oil.

Available statistics on the movement at Aqaba port show that the number of vessels rose from 2583 in 1988, to 2735 in 1996 and 2997, in 1997. However, the total of imported cargo declined from 9,143,165 tons in 1988, to 4,612,453 tons in 1996, with a slight improvement, to 4,778,310 tons, in 1997.

"I personally feel optimistic that Aqaba, which now operates at half of its average capacity, will see a noticeable

growth in the near future," Mr Suleiman noted. One sign that supports his optimism has to do with the well-known American Sealand line, which has shown real willingness to reschedule trips to Aqaba. The line used to organize regular trips and shipments to Aqaba from such places as the US, the Far East, Europe and the Mediterranean, but it ceased to offer service after the second Gulf War.

According to Mr Suleiman, the first of the new Sealand shipments will arrive at Aqaba port within a month's time. The decision taken by American shipping companies to come back to Aqaba reflects their interests in the harbor as a destination for commodities designated for Jordan and as well as a transit terminal for their export to Iraq.

Moreover, Aqaba is attractive in terms of its handling and delivery fees compared with other ports in the immediate vicinity. The service offered by the port's facilities is high quality, its turn over time is short and its handling of all goods, efficient.

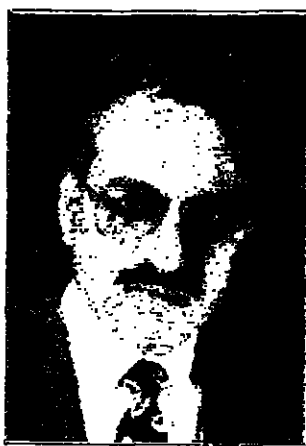
Today, Aqaba handles the distribution of about 9000 tons of wheat per day; the cargo then is carried by trucks to Iraq.

Answering on the benefits that could accrue to Jordan from the planned project to transform Aqaba into a free zone, Mr Suleiman said that "such a project would be, in my view, difficult to realize unless certain laws and measures are reviewed."

Establishing a free zone requires a particular environment where investors can move free from routinely complicated and inflexible regulations. "This means that to create such a zone it is imperative to have flexible rules, incentives for investors, and cut customs and tax fees," he emphasized.

"There is a small free zone near Aqaba port used mainly for storing cargo. If it is improved by developing its infrastructure and encouraging investors, it could become a nucleus for the proposed big harbor zone," maintained Mr Suleiman. It could also be used later as an attractive industrial and commercial center.

Mr Suleiman paid tribute to the efforts of the Association of Shipping Lines in minimizing the burden of such rigid laws and encouraging his company, among others, to operate successfully. These include its efforts to reduce the delivery



Suleiman



fees in the port to encourage the vital movement of ships, and to amend some items in the laws concerning customs and taxes. TGF comes in the first rank among shipping lines in the Kingdom in handling com-

modities in Aqaba, as its share was 25% of total delivery operations. The company also acts as an agent for international shipping lines from Germany, Japan, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the US. ■

expanded to new horizons. TGF is now represented in the world through an internationally diversified network of business activities. These activities range from automobile dealership, trading,

industry and tourism to shipping services and agencies and commercial maritime operations. TGF is a major shareholder in a number of leading firms, and is represented on the board of many industrial firms throughout the Americas, Europe and the Middle East.

Our trading activities include the representation of various international companies such as Mercedes Benz, where we own the general agency for Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and the South of France. TGF has trading associations with such various companies such as Elf, Aquitaine, BASF, Sulzer, Zoro, Clarke, Nestle and IBM.

The new custom-built 11,500 square meter Mercedes Benz showroom and service center at Al-Raqem in Amman offers one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated Mercedes workshops in the Middle East.

TGF is acting as agents for the following leading shipping lines: Rickmers Lines of Hamburg/Germany; Gearbulk Ltd. of Surrey/England; Wallenius Lines, Stockholm/Sweden; Lloyd Triestino S.P.A. Trieste/Italy; Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Tokyo/Japan; Sea-Land Services Inc., New Jersey/USA; Sabmarine-Cairo/Egypt; El-Moez Maritime Co. Suez/Egypt; Trust Marine Shipping Agency-Suez/Egypt; and Neveen agency for Shipping-Suez/Egypt.

TGF is particularly proud of its participation in the following projects which have

enhanced the strategic importance of Aqaba Port:

■ "Tanga Grain Project" which started in 1984 in conjunction with Gearbulk of Norway, a private local company, and the Iraqi Government, and handled up to 2 million tons of grain per year. However, this project was suspended in August 1990 in compliance with the UN sanctions against Iraq.

■ "Rice Project" which started in December 1988 in conjunction with a private local company.

■ "Clinker Exports" which started in May 1989 up to 1995.

TGF has demonstrated unfailing commitment and leadership in contributing to the growth potential of the Middle/Near East shipping business through its large network of modern offices operating in Amman, Aqaba, Beirut, Baghdad, Basra, and recently in PNA at Bethlehem.

The offices in Baghdad and Basra operate under the name "Middle East Shipping Services." TGF is associated in Yemen under special contract with Sam Shipping Co. in Hodeidah and Aden.

Our fully computerized accounts, documentation, container control, statistics and disbursements system help us stay in close touch with the varied demands of a large clientele, shippers and projects, while giving our principals a truly professional service.

In 1993, TGF had the privilege of being agents for the first vessel to call at Aqaba

Port. Since mid-eighties, TGF Jordan has remained above all other shipping agents in the volume of total imports via Aqaba Port. In 1989, for instance, TGF handled more than 4 million tons of cargo accounting for 46.8% of total imports via Aqaba Port. In 1997, TGF handled 24.52% of total imports via Aqaba Port.

TGF offers the most comprehensive range of shipping agency services possible. In fact, about 80% of tramp vessels calling at Aqaba are under our agency and hence benefit from Jordanian exports like phosphates, potash and other cargoes. We have wide experience in handling reefer cargo, in particular frozen chicken, frozen fish, and mutton. In addition, TGF has its in-house Brokerage Department for fixture of vessels with phosphates, potash, cement and any other cargo in both the Red Sea Area and worldwide either on exclusive or competitive basis.

TGF shipping policy is to serve the Near East economic area from several cargo entry points offering the most efficient transport network in the region.

TGF has always kept pace with the development and growing needs of the region. Over the years, our motto has been "TRUST" which is a result of our continuing goal of outstanding achievement through good service and hard work.

TGF is preparing for certification under ISO 9002 within the first quarter of 1998. ■

TGF achievement speaks for itself

T. Gargour & Fils (TGF) celebrated its 69th anniversary in 1997. The company was founded in 1928 in Jaffa, Palestine by the late Tawfiq Gargour in partnership with his four sons: Nicolas, Habib, John and Allenby.

Initially, the company concentrated on trading activities, and over the years these activities have grown and



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Photogenic annals of Czech culture in Amman

AMMAN (Star)—The invention of the camera—this curious ability to produce an image of an object using only a glass plate and a black box—resulted in an historical record-making of 'how things were.'

As interest in this 'record keeping' became more relevant to the representation and understanding of society, photographic technology became more capable of rendering the visual details and complexities of individual and social life that here-to-fore had gone unrecorded. These advances, in turn, increased the freedom of how the photographer approached his subject.

The mutually innovative combination of aesthetics and technology is clearly evident in a current exhibition of the work of two Czech photographers offered by the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

Rudolf Bruner-Dvorak, the earlier of the two, is considered to be the founder of Czech photo-

journalism. His innovation primarily lies in taking photography out of the studio and into the world. Dvorak's keenly focused yet sensitive photographs reveal the end of an historical period dominated by both a fading line of European monarchs and the beginnings of such modern marvels as automobiles and flying machines.

Karel Smirous was far more a technical innovator. He devoted much time and effort to the techniques of color film developing. This interest often makes his photographs experiments in maintaining the crispness of image and color, and because of this his images of flowers, mountains and cities attract on the basis of their formal clarity.

The exhibition, without doubt an inspiration to beginning and expert photographer and common viewer alike, will run till 16 March, at the Royal Cultural Center in Amman. ■

Spanish art

Weaving a web of inspiration

Koffi Attah
Special to The Star

Spain has a deep tradition of excellence in the visual arts, extending back at least as far as the painters Velasquez and El Greco (who admittedly was Greek, but did all his work in Spain), and later including the political and satirical work of Francisco Goya and the psychosomatic presentations of Salvador Dali.

Especially notable in this history is Goya. In addition to his consummate skill as a painter, Goya extended the subject matter and techniques of graphic arts beyond their former reliance on purely aesthetic themes, to include political and moral commentary on contemporary society.

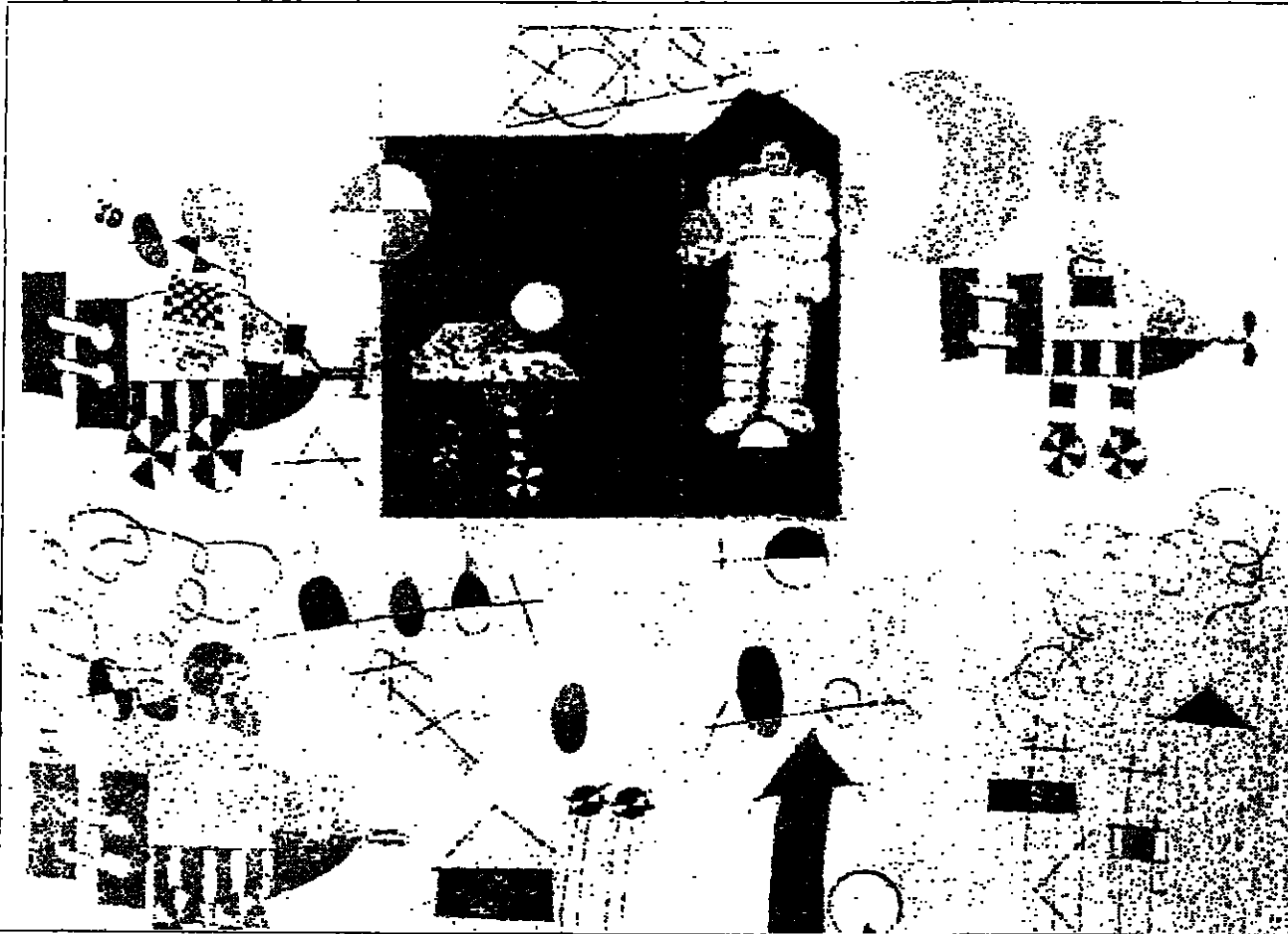
These innovations, particularly the aesthetic and critically active combination that gave visual form and the need to comment on the mundane aspects of daily life—almost a form of journalism—live on. They are currently exemplified in the show of 55 works by contemporary Spanish graphic artists on display at The Cervantes Institute in Amman.

The show should prove a real inspiration to Jordanian artists.

Dr Tabseen Ojella, the director of the Institute emphasized,

"Spain is very rich in graphic arts and there are a lot of graphic artists whose works and experience must be shared with the Jordanian public. All through the exhibition, now at the exhibition hall of the Institute—classical, beautiful and at times humorous paintings are to be found.

All the participating artists belong to the generation of the '80s. Some of them have had their works shown in Egypt. Maria Gomez's paint-



ing "Mention of Honor" was displayed during the 2nd International Triennial in Cairo, 1992.

It shows a lady operating an ancient automobile. Yolanda Del Riego has also exhibited some of his works in the Alexandria Biennial of Graphic Arts in 1987. In 1989 his abstract works were among many of the exhibits on show in the 14th All Alaska International Prize of New York. Jose Manuel Ciria participated in the International Triennial graphic arts exhibi-

tion of Cairo, 1992 and the International Biennial graphic arts exhibition of Cairo in 1995.

All of the artists are widely known. Santiago Serrano is a household name in graphic art in Spain. He excelled with his works in the first National Graphic Arts of Madrid in 1996. Agueda De La Piza, may be unknown to Jordanians but is well known in Egypt, gold medal in the Third Biennial International Graphic Arts of Cairo in 1989. Mela Ferrer, whose works

are also on display has previously featured in the Biennial Vamographic arts exhibition of '85 in Bulgaria, and as well participated in the First Biennial graphic arts of Maastricht, Holland.

From the exhibit it's clear how much weight Spanish graphic arts carry in the world, especially its influence in the Mediterranean region of which Jordan is a part. The current exhibition is relevant and inspiring to Jordanian artists and art lovers. One attractive and moving piece of work is by Monir, a Spaniard of Bangladeshi descent.

Her works are full of exuberant colors and express a gaiety emphasized by her skill in graphic arts. With their rising shapes in the upper areas of the painting, an effect is obtained that still leaves the visitor to wonder and interpret in his own way. The skillfully selected works on display, feature such other famed Spanish graphic artists as Isabel Esteve, Sohad Lachiri, Fernando Almela, Pedro Castortega, Fernando Bermejo and many more.

The works of Antonio Lorenzo and Gerardo Rueda, hanging at the extreme end of the hall, spotlight a series of witty situations in which characters gossip, invent, manipulate, create happiness or at least do what they can to banish boredom and forget about the ills of life.

This totally inspiring exhibition began on 26 February 1998, was organized by the Cervantes Institute of the Spanish Cultural Center in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy, of Amman, Jordan, and continues until 20 March 1998. Gallery hours at the center are daily, except Fridays. ■

Spirit of Dubai reflects high in its skyscrapers

By Marwan Asmar
Star staff writer

The beauty of art lies in its versatility. It can be a painting, a sculpture or even a way of life that is designed to be pleasing to the eye, to captivate the eye or even to shock it. The versatility element is crucial because it means that time and again, art is able to convey the same inspirational effect.

And in this respect, the latest exhibition of artist David Rees must be seen as an eye-opener. It has all the trappings

of originality. This is because of the way he went about projecting his artwork.

His latest 20-painting exhibit, titled "The Spirit of Dubai—A 5th Dimension" has the touch of the exquisite. But the catchword lies in the title. No, it is not something from out of space. The Anglo-Australian painter simply hit upon the idea of using Dubai's smooth and elongated skyscrapers for his form of graphic art.

But there is more then meets the eye when you walk into the exhibition which is held at Dubai's

InterContinental. Painting upon painting is splashed with a richly-mixed multi-media of colors designed to reflect the high-tech modes of graphic art. But it soon becomes intriguing once it is realized that the paintings are no more than full-blown replicas of reflections of Dubai's skyscrapers which Mr Rees has photographed over an eight-month period last year.

He went about Dubai with his camera shooting photographs of images of other buildings that are reflected on the glass hoisted skyscrapers. As shown by the exhibit, these

are actual reflections of other tall buildings and high rise flats.

This is an original concept. "I've yet to see someone who has indulged in this kind of art," he says. "What I do first is take a photograph of a reflection of a building, and then paint the picture. However, as a photographer, I take a lot of shots and then I choose the best one, and paint it, right up to the last detail."

He says that different colored glass towers reflect images in an unusual way and often produce interesting distortions. And this is where the art lies since it involves transposing the photo-finish onto a canvas in oils.

His first painting on display, for example, reflects the awesome nature such work requires. The "Dimension Trade Center" is an image of the Dubai World Center as reflected in the glass-worm Al Moosa Tower on the Sheikh Zayed Road.

"It took me about 200 hours to paint," he says with a smile. Its distorted and slightly reflection on the glass of the Al Moosa tower proved very complicated to paint because of the intricate detail that was involved. The painting had a tremendous impact.

The paintings do have a startling effect: they make the onlooker ponder carefully. With each painting comes the original photograph of the reflection explaining what the artwork is supposed to represent. He admits that one of his most complicated graphics was the "Complex Dimension." This is a reflection of the Shafaq building on the glass of the Ministry of Health.

The painting is one of the most complex, with long thick and thin lines being vertically drawn. Rees says the painting was drawn from an angle. He looks around and says simply, that it is simply too complicated. "It is pleasing, but at



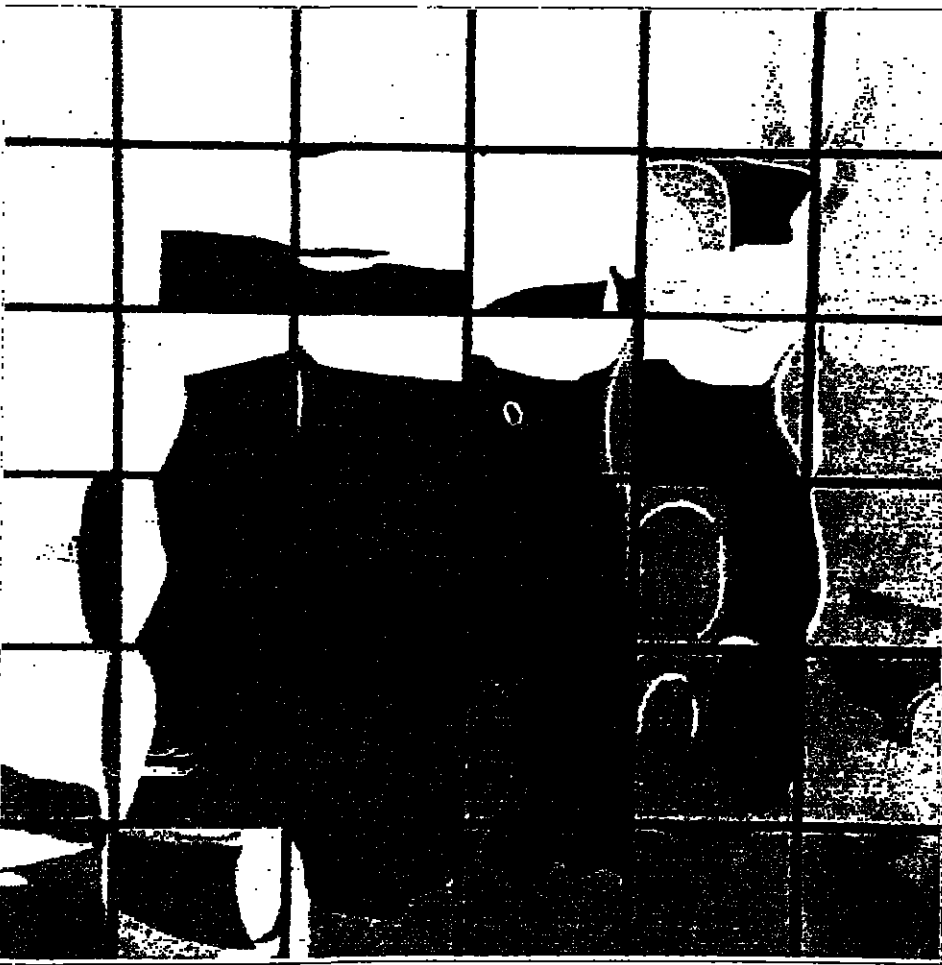
the same time provides challenges to people." He says that people have looked at the different paintings and conjured up different images and views. "They came up with different conclusions, and you would be amazed to hear what they would see in the paintings," he points out.

This is clearly because of the different varieties that are on display. "The Dubai Flag Dimension" is a reflection of the Humarain Center with a flag reflected onto the Travel building. It looks like a rich red abstraction with grey and off-white in the surroundings. Similarly "The Highlight Dimension" is a reflection of the National National Bank of Dubai onto the Ministry of Health building.

As a graphic designer who worked in the advertising

business for a long time, Mr Rees says he chooses the right format when drawing. He adds that "the artworks should dominate the room, it's hold stare you in the face." And this is exactly the impression one receives when pondering on the "Shapes-made by the Wind." Immediately from afar it grabs the on-looker because of its rich yellow-orange texture of sand dunes, that keep on stretching. Although it represents only sand, the picture is panoramic.

The artist says that this painting was based on a photograph taken from an air balloon. Its waves upon waves look as though somebody is diving into the picture. Indeed, this is what Rees is talking about when he says that a picture should have a dominating presence. ■



SCRAPBOOK

By Christian Douni

Keeping abreast of G.I. Jane

When Demi Moore had her breasts done, I wonder what the surgeons put in there. When I next see Dr. Ghelth Shuballat I may just ask him for an opinion. Ever since then, Miss Moore has played almost every role the same, that of a strong woman determined to have it all in a real man's world. I first saw her in "Disclosure"—obviously attracted by a life-size billboard in Amman which was so erotic and provocative, the mayor of Aix-en-Provence banned the poster, not the film, from his town. Temptation and my inclination for voyeurism prevailed and there I went. In this picture, Demi Moore plays the role of a top corporate executive who sexually harasses one of her male colleagues. There is no fury like a woman searching for a new lover, finding one, sharpening her claws to get him and in the process fulfilling a dark need. These are great moments in a woman's life.

G.I. Jane is about women in the army and the controversy in the US concerning sexual harassment as well as sexual relations in the armed forces. Of 360 women sailors on the US shift Arcadia during the Gulf war 36 became pregnant. But there were tragedies as well when two women pilots shot themselves when told to resign or face criminal charges for having affairs with enlisted men.

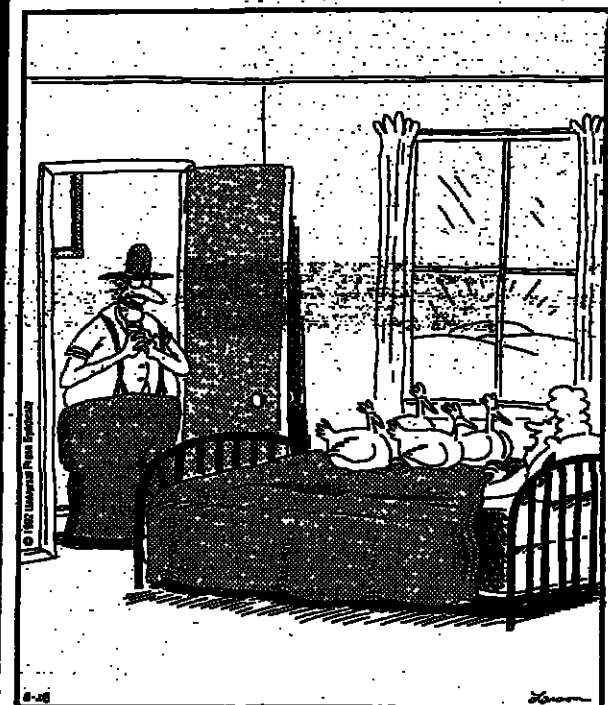
The movie playing at the Philadelphia has more to do with political correctness than common sense. G.I. Jane is toned and muscled and wants to be treated like a man. She doesn't want any special privileges, she tells her commander. He reminds her he had to hire a gynaecologist to ensure she gets regular pap smears. As he is fondling a big cigar, he asks her if she finds the shape offensive. "No Sir," she replies "only the stretch."

Throughout the film, Demi Moore has a hard expression. She never smiles and it's difficult to warm to her. Her best moment is perhaps at the end when having gained the respect of all her male colleagues they acclaim her in a chorus by recalling one of her earlier angry outbursts.

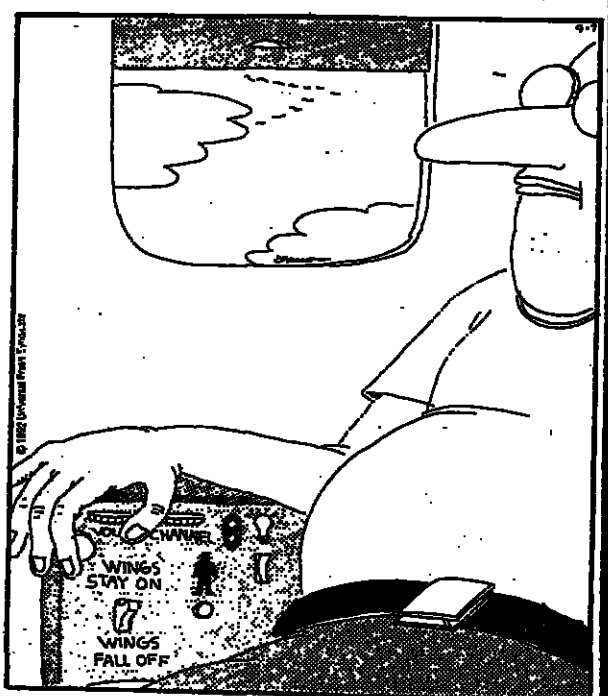
I wonder what the Arabic subtitles said, but the audience didn't flinch. This is the only time I remember Demi Moore smiling. ■

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"This is it, Maurice! I've warned you to keep your hens off me!"



Fumbling for his recline button, Ted unwittingly instigates a disaster.



Call delinquents

MARCH 1998

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A will of their own, and the numbers too

What happens when you build the future and nobody under the age of 30 shows up?



That intifada feeling: the willingness of Palestinian youths to risk their lives and defy authority has helped shape events in the Middle East

Trusting only themselves—and certainly nobody over 30

Latin teenagers shun revolution and laws

By Carlos Castillo

DON'T TRUST ANYBODY older than 30! This was the main message of a well known pop song of the early 1980s in Brazil, when the so-called rebel generation reached its peak in Latin America. Two decades later, almost nobody under 30 even knows the lyrics. But more than 83 percent of the teenagers in the region act as if they sang this song every day, according to data gathered by the US-based multinational research company DMB&B (D'Arcy, Masius, Benton & Bowles). Individualism is the key characteristic of Latin America's first generation of globalized adolescents. "They trust only themselves, mainly because they are convinced that the older generation is exclusively concerned with its [own] needs, goals and wishes," states a document released last November by Demoskopia, an Argentinean public opinion research firm.

These teenagers interpret individualism in a variety of ways. Among the well-off children of the technocrats, their mood mirrors that of the lonely riders that stalk the literature of America's Wild West. But the barrios of Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Caracas, San Salvador or Bogota, the young have developed a different sort of individualism. It's a kind that Brazilian sociologist Alba Zaluar calls "group individualism," but police simply call "street gangs."

Both the lonely riders and the street gangs are deeply suspicious of politicians, religious leaders and teachers. The DMB&B research found that less than 2 percent of young boys and girls

of Brazil and Colombia regard political leaders as role models, while teachers were trusted by only 19 percent.

Ironically, parents ranked highest with 64 percent. This may be due to the fact that, despite the huge generation gap within families, Latin American adolescents don't have much hope of leaving their parents' house, even when—or if—they finish university. The lack of jobs and reasonable wages are the main obstacle.

United in their mistrust, the two schools of individualism are divided in their response to it. Middle class teenagers bet on smartness (not necessarily legal) to succeed, while working class adolescents are prone to believe in group force—mainly illegal—as a leverage for power and money. Missing from both equations is education—graduation is steadily declining as a teenager goal. In Brazil, half of the 500,000 students who succeed in getting into university each year drop out within two years.

Not surprisingly, many Latin American countries associate teenagers with crime—especially when they are dressed according to the rap style and look poor. In Costa Rica, upper middle class ladies and el-

ders cross the street when they see a *chupulén* (originally a word used for young criminals but later stretched to encompass rap dressed teenagers). In El Salvador, a group of young males is always associated with the *maras*, the feared street gangs formed by the sons of exiles who lived in Los Angeles during the civil war.

This lawless image comes at a price. Last year, anybody under 18 was subject to a 10 p.m. curfew in four Ecuadorian provinces, including the one where Guayaquil—the biggest city in this Andean country—is located. The reason given by the police was crime prevention, but the non governmental Human Rights Permanent Assembly called the decision an "unjust satanization of all teenagers." The adolescents' curfew didn't last because street violence didn't vanish.

Being young, black and poor in the streets is dangerously close to a death sentence in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, in Brazil. From time to time police and vigilante groups exterminate the street children (*trombadinhas*) with no previous questioning. Now the main focus of violence in Rio are the funk dancers in the poor suburbs of the city. Every weekend teenagers gathered in ballrooms to perform a ritual that looks like a war dance—and frequently is, ending up in a battle among different groups.

When the funk dancers and *trombadinhas* show up during the weekends at the sophisticated beaches of the Southern part of Rio, beachgoers prepare for a mass robbery, popularly known as *arrastao*. The worst fear of the victims is the arrival of the police, because it is normally accompanied by random gunfire and a stampede of panicked beachgoers that causes more harm than the loss of watches, wallets and cameras.

"Violence, either in the affluent or in the impoverished sector of the society, is the most common reaction of teenagers against a system that ignores them," states the Brazilian sociologist Alba Zaluar, a long time researcher in adolescent matters in Rio de Janeiro. She disagrees with other social experts, who say that the Latin American teenagers became conformist in the globalization era. Writing for *Jornal do Brasil*, Zaluar expressed her concern about what she calls a ghetto mentality among teenagers, "no matter if they are rich or poor."

Her critics can point to the numbers. According to the DMB&B research,

WORLDS APART

% of population under 15 : % over 65	
Iran	44 : 3
Saudi Arabia	42 : 3
China	26 : 8
Venezuela	38 : 4
Nigeria	46 : 3
US	22 : 13
Japan	16 : 15
Sweden	19 : 18
Spain	16 : 16
Australia	21 : 12

23 percent of Brazil's teenagers view themselves as conservative. Only 6 percent define themselves as rebels, but an intriguing 26 percent say they are "original," a vague concept that encompasses almost everything. In Argentina, this conservative streak manifests itself in the Pastortti phenomenon. A 17-year-old singer, Soledad Pastortti, is a phenomenon.

REVOLUTION AND LAWS NEXT PAGE

From Iran to Indonesia, from Egypt to Ecuador, leaders are trying to harness the explosive energy of teenage populations whose numbers far exceed those of the governing classes. Those that fail pay a steep price in the currency of crime, violence and lost economic opportunities—which makes focusing this angst on 'foreign interference' all the more attractive. For the developed countries, these imperatives are hard to understand. Their leaders worry about too few children; US politicians, for instance, are beginning to debate how today's teenagers will pay the Social Security bill handed to them by their elders.

By Humayun Gauhar

PAKISTAN IS OVERRUN by millions of teenagers. They live in cities awash with guns and drugs, largely ignored by a government that cannot provide jobs and will not muster the political will needed to fund their future.

These are, for the most part, intelligent boys and girls who just want a fair chance to earn a decent living. If Pakistan had taken steps to control the birth rate after the 1960s, provided good compulsory education and created jobs by encouraging economic growth through direct investment, it would have been a different story. But it did not, and many of these teenagers are turning to crime or seeking answers from religious groups hostile to development and modernization.

Why did Pakistan allow this to happen, and why has it let this huge mass of energetic youngsters—60 percent of the population of about 140 million is under 21 years of age—slip into apathy or violent frustration?

The problem starts with the birthrate. Remember the population of what is Pakistan today was 35 to

one diversion.

This tendency to procreate is not matched by an awareness of contraception. Perversely, due to the high population growth rate—and pitifully low funds allocated to education—fewer people are getting the basic skills they need to understand family planning. Pakistan it is perhaps the only country in the world where the literacy rate has actually fallen. The government figure is 36 percent, but most believe it is half that rate.

Pakistan's demographics are even more explosive. Males outnumber females 52 percent to 48 percent. Soon young men will have a hard time finding a bride, adding to their frustrations. There are fewer females because they are fed and cared for less in the rural areas, boys being seen as potential workers and bread winners, and because the high birth rate and woefully poor medical facilities lead to an excessive mortality rate at childbirth.

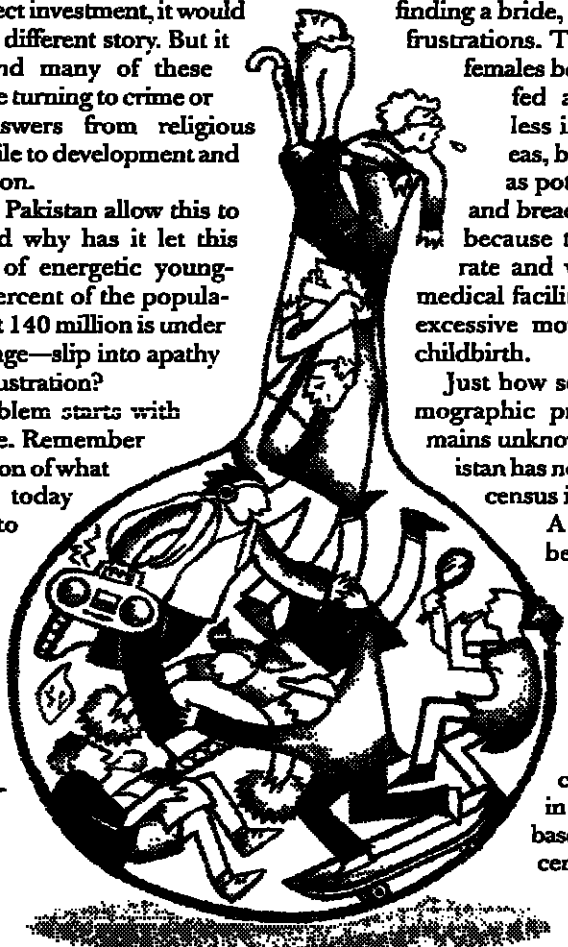
Just how serious the demographic problem is remains unknown, since Pakistan has not conducted a census in 16 years.

A census has not been held because of pressure from the feudal lords, known as the feudal lobby. Because the allocation of seats in parliament is based on the 1981 census, when the rural-urban ratio was 70:30, these feudal

lords have an inordinately high representation. Today, a census would likely reveal the ratio is 50:50, a finding the feudal lords do not want to see the light of day because it would reduce their seats in parliament, and in turn erode their hold on every state institution which give them undue privileges.

One of those privileges is an exemption from income tax which, when allied to the enormous population growth, explains why Pakistan's teenage population have little hope of climbing the educational ladder to security and prosperity. The government, which gives education a low

NB: NOBODY SHOWS UP NEXT PAGE





The future is that way: in developed countries, teenagers are often viewed as violent and destructive. Public policy debates are reflecting this, with calls for curfews and adult treatment if they commit a crime

NOBODY SHOWS UP

Continued from previous page

priority anyway, won't increase the tax base for fear of the feudal lobby. Thus, only manufacturing and the salaries are taxed.

Manufacturing represents only about 18 percent of the economy, agriculture about 36 percent and services 46 percent. There is no tax on agricultural incomes and hardly any on services. As for the salaries, there are only a million taxpayers in a population of 140 million! Thus out of a paltry budget of 525 billion rupees (\$11.5 billion), education gets 33 million rupees, which is a whopping \$733,333. Looked at another way, Pakistan spends less than \$5 per hospital bed and per child attending primary school, but \$6,000 per soldier for its half-million strong armed forces.

Worse still, this budget is badly out of balance. The revenue target is only \$10.2 billion, the rest being the deficit. Overall, the debt burden that will be bequeathed to those millions of adolescents is now so heavy that this fiscal year \$4.2 billion is allocated to servicing it.

Despite all of this, most of the city boys and girls have some form of education. But they cannot find jobs. Most make ends meet thanks to the informal economy—tax evasion, moonlighting, smuggling and so on—which is two and a half times as big as the formal economy of \$70 billion GDP. While this helps them survive, it reinforces their lack of connection to, and allegiance towards, the state.

In the absence of educational and job opportunities, Pakistan has seen the rise of an alternative with a different message for the young. During the last 17 years, religious schools called *madrasas* (plural *madaris*) have sprung up. Today there are some 40,000 of them. Run by Islamic clerics of various sects, the *madaris* are free and the poor villagers and town folk send their boys there simply so that they can get fed, sheltered and clothed. In most *madaris* the pupils are imparted the mullah version of religious education by rote and are indoctrinated against anything and everything modern, progressive, Western or Westernized.

Many of these *madaris* were set up by Afghani mullahs to educate refugees who came to Pakistan to escape the Soviet occupation. President General Zia ul Haq, the American-backed Pakistani dictator at the time, encouraged this and soon Pakistani mullahs followed suit. That is the genesis of the Taliban phenomenon in Afghanistan.

Graduates of these schools are far more dangerous than the drug swilling, gun-toting, frustrated, unemployed urban teenagers. Because they have found an emotional home and are fired by a primitive missionary zeal. If the government does not start delivering soon, the Taliban will harness this adolescent energy and turn on a Pakistan. ☐

HUMAYUN GAUHAIR IS THE EDITOR OF *Politics & Business*, A KARACHI-BASED NEWSMAGAZINE.

Making up for parents

US capital tries to enforce quality time

Children's Express is an independent, non-profit news service reported by children whose tape-recorded roundtables, interviews and commentary are edited by their peers. Editors in its Washington, D.C. bureau recently held a roundtable to discuss whether or not the local curfew—a popular approach worldwide to managing adolescents—is doing anything to keep young people off the streets or lower the crime rate

Beth Formukong, 16: I think that the reason this whole curfew thing came about is because parents have not taken responsibility for their children. I'm not just talking about the curfew. There are parents out there that don't care.

Christina Burch, 17: I feel that those rules are like being a supplement parent. Those are not my mother's rules. I am one of the fortunate ones who have my mother and she is taking care of me and my brothers.

Olan Griffith, 16: But when you step out of your house, your mother is entrusting you to whoever looks over us in the city; the police officers, the government, the man in the corner store. When you go to school, if something happens to you, your mother is going to look to whoever is responsible for the kids in school.

Lakesa Mayo, 17: There are parents who are not doing their job and when they stop doing their job, that's when I feel like the government should step in. Somebody needs to be there to correct those kids who are doing wrong.

This whole thing is made to reduce crime. The kids that don't really need it are the ones that aren't going to be out there. I think the ones that have problems are the ones that are going to be out there.

REVOLUTION AND LAWS

Continued from previous page

toruti defines herself as "a traditionalist who likes the time when the wife referred to the husband as Mister, when there was no divorce and single mothers." Hugely popular with teenagers, Soledad sold a staggering 300,000 copies of her CD and is fully booked through December.

Indeed, a philosophy of forward to the past seems to appeal to adolescents threatened by unemployment, urban violence and families falling apart in the Southern Hemisphere. The future looks—and is—bleak. An impressive rate of 51 percent of young Colombians believe they will be victims of crime before they reach adult-

hood. The figures back them up. Approximately 2,300 teenagers and children were killed in 1996 in Bogotá as victims of the street violence and two in every 10 youngsters will never reach adulthood in the poor slums of the city.

In another gesture to the past, some 5,000 youngsters gathered last August in La Habana, Cuba, in an effort to keep alive the old tradition of political rebellion in Latin America. This adolescent tribe, threatened by extinction, paid homage to its icon, Che Guevara. But it failed to propose a new revolutionary strategy for the future of Latin America. ☐

Christina: They did say, though, that the crime rate amongst teenagers has gone down since the curfew. It's not the curfew, I think. I think the teenagers are just scared about what they were saying, your mother's going to go to jail or your mother gets fined 'cause you do wrong.

Kristen Jordan, 15: We found that you can't be out between 11:01 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. The penalty for violating the curfew in the District of Columbia is as follows: When picked up, you're taken in and if a parent or guardian does not come to get you before 6 a.m., then you go to court. In court, a parent must be present and the court can either give you a \$500 fine or community service.

Christina: Just like regular criminals, they give you the one, two, three penalty. If you do it three times, then your parents go to jail. But most people I know don't listen to it anyway.

Olan: I know a lot of times if you are out past that time, you see a lot of police officers. They don't stop you. They can't enforce that rule, I don't think.

Christina: I think they enforce it in certain neighborhoods. I know in my neighborhood, the police come by all the time. It's always boys on the corner, even girls hanging out. I know I go to carry-outs [restaurants] at two, three in the morning if I get that craving and have money in my pocket.

Karen Abrecht, 17: The police department, they really don't have the people to enforce it over the entire city. And if they can't enforce it over the entire city, they shouldn't be doing it.

Beth: I don't think it's being enforced the way it should be. The officers have other things to worry about, other things that are more important.

Christina: I think the police officers understand that this is stupid. It's like when your teacher gives you busy work. Nobody wants to be out there policing somebody else's kids. ☐

Carlos Castilho is a WorldPaper Associate Editor for Latin America.

All too often, if you want butter you need guns

African youths fight for their future

By Ayebare Adonia

ADOLESCENCE IS virtually nonexistent in modern African culture. Children as young as eight join the labor market and do jobs that, in other countries, are done by 40-year-old people. A depressing number of these "jobs" involve firearms.

Signs of hope are few and far between. The structural adjustment policies introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have, so far, made things worse. Forced to rein in public spending, government support for social amenities such as education has shrunk—the need to compensate has boosted the cost, forcing many African children out of school.

This reality is in stark contrast to the policy environment, which is alive with concerned officials and new initiatives aimed at giving teenagers a stake in society. The search for this magic formula continues—so far without success.

Much of this concern stems from realpolitik. Adolescents whose only skills are military pose a real threat to many African societies. They are often part of a stubborn vicious circle whereby crumbling, unstable economies produce a new crop of children who end up deterring economic growth when they take to crime in order to survive. Children as young as 8 years old carrying AK-47 rifles in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) are a common sight and have earned a reputation of overthrowing regimes.

This ability to cause trouble has awakened African governments. But they are finding that putting programs high on the agenda is not enough. Emmanuel Odong, a "street child" in Kampala, says that he ended up on the streets due to lack of any alternatives after his parents died in the 1990 fighting. Odong and other African youngsters are looking for results.

Adolescents in Uganda, for example, strongly believe that their future must be guaranteed. If not, they will continue to make their point using all means at their disposal. Even those children who have access to education

and come from stable families say that they need to be assured of a secure future, by which they mean getting a job after graduation.

There are exceptions. Moses Katongore, a self-employed graduate, says young people should think positively and "go it on their own" because relying on the state is a bad bet. African states, he points out, are themselves beggars that rely on foreign financing for almost everything.

Overall, African children are an optimistic lot who, like their counterparts in other countries, say the future belongs to them despite the fact the old people are messing up everything. What is worrying experts, however, is the number of adolescents waiting to lay claim to that future.

If current economic and social trends continue, the number of child laborers in Africa will swell by at least 1 million each year, the International Labor Organization (ILO) warned in a report issued in Kampala this February. The report says that the poverty, population and education indicators give a potentially bleak picture for the future of Africa.

According to the report—released simultaneously in Kampala and Geneva—which is entitled *Child Labor in Africa: Targeting the Intolerable*, the number of child laborers in Africa could surge from today's 80 million to over 100 million by the year 2015 as a result of demographic explosion of impoverished people allied to poor or inadequate levels of economic growth across much of the continent.

The Director General of the ILO, Michel Hansenne, told delegates at a

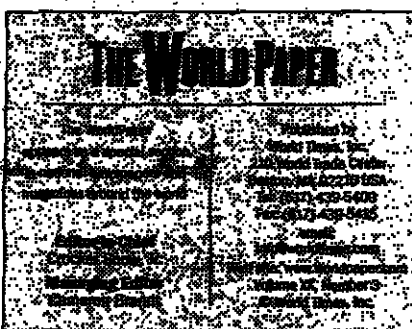
related conference in Kampala that urgent action must be taken now if the trend has to be reversed. Although much time was devoted to national cases and experiences, there was a consensus among those present that Hansenne's urgency is merited.

Spurring the Kampala delegates were the appalling statistics which depict the seriousness of the problem. In percentage terms, Africa already has the highest incidence of child laborers with

approximately 41 percent of all children between 5 and 14 years old involved in economic activity versus 21 percent in Asia and 17 percent in Latin America. In Uganda and Kenya, experts put the percentage of children in the labor market at between 40 and 46 percent.

Representatives from the East Africa sub-region admit that only Kenya and Tanzania have adopted comprehensive national policies and programs on child labor since the early 1990s. Uganda has, however, joined Ethiopia, South Africa, Madagascar, Mali, Guinea, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso to actively debate the issue. ☐

AYEBARE ADONIA WRITES FOR *The East African*, A KAMPALA-BASED NEWSPAPER.



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Newman aside, 'Twilight' same old story

By Kenneth Turan

GIVEN HOLLYWOOD'S current emphasis on things dark and murderous, it was only a matter of time before elderly parties wanted a piece of the action. 'Twilight,' starring 73-year-old Paul Newman, 67-year-old Gene Hackman, 69-year-old James Garner and 51-year-old babe-in-the-woods Susan Sarandon, represents the flowering of that inevitable subgenre: geezer noir.

You know you're watching geezer noir when the protagonists make small talk about their prostates, not platinum blondes. Lines like "Not at my age" and "I'm tired" are also giveaways. And when the studio artificially darkens the star's hair color on the key art, you can be sure you've arrived.

It's a shame that Paramount couldn't live with a naturally gray Paul Newman on 'Twilight's' poster, because his cool and laconic performance as retired private eye Harry Ross is a fine thing. No one on screen has aged better than Newman; his mustache may be faded and his hair thin, but his eyes remain flinty and hypnotic and his ability to be a hero even in repose

remains unimpaired.

Newman's less-is-more acting technique has if anything gotten stronger over the years. The actor's presence creates involvement while he's just standing still, and he brings the perfect been-around quality to the sardonic Ross, supplying a world-weariness that carries lines like, "I'm going to pretend you weren't here tonight, which is almost true."

That verbal archness comes courtesy of director Robert Benton (a geezer noir pioneer with 1977's 'Art Carney' starring 'The Late Show') and his co-writer Richard Russo. These two also collaborated on Newman's last film, 'Nobodies Fool,' which was based on a Russo novel.

'Twilight' has periodic stretches of unforced dialogue, supporting actors like Hackman and Sarandon who know how to handle those moments, and a generally relaxed attitude that provides shelter for the amusing eccentricities that all Los Angeles-based private eye movies are legally obligated to provide.

Though audiences will appreciate these extras, extras are all they remain. Despite its pluses, despite trying to do all the right things, 'Twilight' comes up lacking in energy and plot, two areas that no noir, geezer or otherwise, can afford to be caught short in.

Newman himself categorized Harry Ross in a recent interview by referring to one of his earlier roles and calling the retired P.I. "a Harper that has lost a couple of big ones. He has found out his old tricks don't work." Once a cop, once married with a family until alcoholism took everyone away, Ross is a gray ghost who's pretty much given up carrying a gun because he fears he's become a danger to himself.

After a brief prologue that outlines the start of his involvement with married movie stars Jack and Catherine Ames (Hackman and Sarandon), their daughter Mel (Reese Witherspoon) and her boyfriend Jeff (Liev Schreiber), the present finds Harry still living at the Ames' house, doing errands and making himself generally useful.

'Twilight's' plot proper begins with a classic film noir line: Jack, who's dying of cancer, hands Harry a package and says, "give this to a woman named Gloria Lamar." That's the kind of nominally simple instruction that is fated to lead to all kinds of unforeseen complications, and it does.

What that task does at first is reinstate Harry with numerous people from his past, including a fellow private eye (James Garner), an old flame (Stockard Channing) and a man who may or may not have been a partner (Giancarlo Esposito).

Then things get more serious. Decades-old secrets spill out, murder and blackmail take center stage, and Harry is



Paul Newman

forced to watch as "people run out of the little bit of luck they have."

While this sounds involving enough, in fact, involving enough is just what it isn't. 'Twilight's' sense of relaxation may be an asset at first, but the film is finally so relaxed it's almost not there. The story line and certain key characterizations (especially

Sarandon's Catherine Ames) are too predictable and unconvincing, and there is a lack of energy, of punch, about the whole project that is fatal. If geezer noir is going to catch on, pacemakers are going to have to become standard issue from now on. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

By Chris Kaltenbach

SOME PEOPLE are just plain nasty. Such as Martha Baring, as played by Jessica Lange in 'Hush,' a mother-in-law-from-hell film co-written and directed, with more good intentions than good sense, by newcomer Jonathan Darby.

She's not a full-bore loon. She's not a knife-wielding maniac. And she's not blessed with the sort of supernatural powers that would allow her to die at a crucial moment, only to be revived in time for the final, blood-curdling act.

Nope, she's just mean. And perhaps a tad too devoted to her son.

We're introduced to Martha the morning after her son, Jackson, and his girlfriend, Helen (Johnathon Schaech and Gwyneth Paltrow), arrive to spend Christmas at Kilton, a down-on-its-luck Kentucky horse farm that's been in the Baring family for generations. And Lange wastes no time in letting us know Martha's a piece of work, oozing with so much double-edged

Southern charm—almost everything she says and does is a double entendre—that even her son feels ill at ease when she's around.

That being the case, think how spooked Helen must feel. Only Helen, for reasons the script never really makes clear, takes a liking to Martha. Which is convenient, since the two women can work together at persuading Jackson to move

back and take over the day-to-day operation of Kilton.

That he does, along with Helen, who's now his wife and soon to be the mother of his child. But in Martha's world, while male Barings are always welcome, there's only room for one Mrs. Baring.

Darby, who shares the screenwriting credit with Jane Rusconi, deserves praise for taking the road less traveled; it would have been easy for him

(If you were dumping on your mother-in-law inside her house, wouldn't you at least close the bedroom door?) The whole script would collapse like a house of cards if only the characters would talk plainly to each other—especially a particularly irritating grandmother (a game Nina Foch) who knows the level of Martha's wickedness but insists on speaking in riddles.

Most embarrassing of all, the ending (which is way underdeveloped, perhaps because it was changed at the last minute) requires Helen, the morning after a particularly harrowing birth, to look as chipper and radiant as...well, as Paltrow after a good night's sleep. Not likely.

Paltrow's Helen is a winning combination of vulnerability and allure in the PG-13-rated film; it's not hard to see why Jackson falls in love with her or why Martha sees her as a threat. But those are her character's strongest points, and she's too intelligent an actress for a part so shallow.

Lange seems to be having fun with her character; she's trying to be Bette Davis in 'Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?' but without the bad makeup.

Perhaps she succeeds too well; Martha is so obviously bad news, it's hard to believe Helen ever falls for the act.

Two stars. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Jessica Lange

to churn out yet another 'Fatal Attraction' clone. In which two women duke it out over one man, the winner being the one who can most effectively wield a knife.

Unfortunately, to make the film he wanted, Darby populated it with some of the dumbest characters since Jerry Lewis—especially Jackson, who comes across as just this side of morose. Schaech ('That Thing You Do') tries to do something with the character, but there's no there there.

What's worse, the film relies on too many conveniences to advance its plot.

Get a life: get a Harley



By Samer Iskandar

THERE IS no such thing as a "standard" Harley-Davidson. Because customizing adding or replacing parts to give it the personal touch is central to the Harley myth, every motorcycle leaving the US company's plants is destined to become different from all others.

HD's own list of accessories fills hundreds of pages of catalogues and dozens of manufacturers, some closely associated with the company, offer thousands of additional spare parts.

There are several variants of every item making up a Harley, ranging from whole engine blocks to individual nuts and bolts. Indeed, most customized machines have more hand-made additions than original parts.

As hundreds of thousands of Harley enthusiasts prepare to celebrate the company's 95th anniversary (more than 100,000 rode to Milwaukee, where the company is based, for the 90th anniversary in June 1993), an exhibition in London pays tribute to some of the best known customizers.

One is Arlen Ness, who has been transforming HD motorcycles into "rolling works of art" for more than 30 years. His "Two Bad"—an elongated machine with two supercharged HD 900cc engines and four fuel tanks—is world famous. It is hard to believe that the same person who conceived this enormous machine also came up with the delicate etchings

that grace several gilded engine parts.

The exhibition traces the roots of customisation to the 1940s when the quest for higher performance led bikers to strip—or cut down to a symbolic size—such "superfluous" items as fenders, exhaust pipes and front brakes.

The resulting machines—which appear in 'The Wild One,' the 1954 film starring Marlon Brando—were called "bobbers."

Customisation evolved in the 1960s with the arrival of "choppers," characterised by low seats and long front forks and made famous by the "Captain America" motorcycle in the cult film Easy Rider.

Judging by the popularity of some machines on display, the trend seems to be shifting in favour of wrap-around bodies reminiscent of 1950s cars—a shift likely to propel a new breed of customisers into the limelight. One German motorcycleist, who rode to London for the exhibition, says: "Building a body from scratch will distinguish the real artists from the chainsaw variety. It is not enough these days to pull off the fenders and add a couple of chromed pieces."

The pink Flight Deville at the exhibition is a particularly successful example. Its similarities with vintage cars are not limited to the shape of the fenders: creator Tank Ewischek fitted the machine with a headlight ring from a 1940 Ford sedan and a tail light from a 1959 Cadillac.

Nessa's Ferrari Bike, arguably a precursor of the new trend, stands out as an anachronism. Its car-like red body, which covers a 2,100cc engine with two superchargers, was built to measure from metal sheets at a time when other customisers were stripping motorcycles of their existing parts.

A strong impression conveyed by the exhibition is that customisation, which really reached Europe only in the 1970s, remains at its best in American hands: a feeling reinforced by the prize-winning "Shuttle," an ill-named creation by George Savage, which attracts a lot of attention but little praise.

This 1993 Electra Glide is dressed with up to 500 lights of different colours, shapes and sizes. Its most attractive characteristic, according to one onlooker, is that the lights can be turned off.

Noteworthy exceptions, however, include a couple of elegant transformations by the Battistini brothers (Rikki and Dean) of Bournemouth, Dorset, and an innovative but (relatively) discreet three-wheeler by Danny Franssen of Belgium. "Tribute to Steve Ray," by Vaughan, by France's Nicolas Chauvin, sports one of the most elaborate paint jobs undertaken on a motorcycle, including a portrait of the blues guitarist Jimi Hendrix on the fuel tank alongside. The paintwork, which took more than two months to complete, is matched only by another Ness creation, "Flaming Shovel."

Financial Times Syndication

Royal breed restored: Jaguar's latest sedans

By Paul Dean

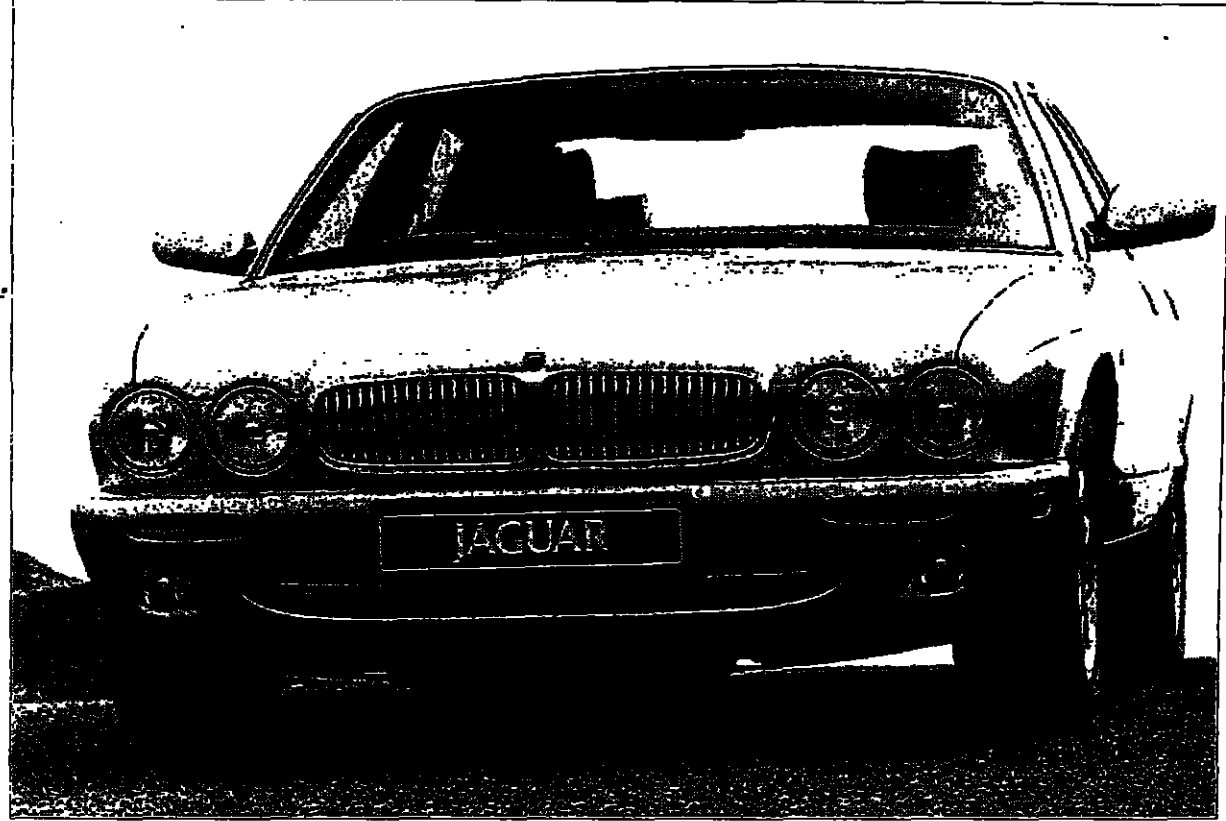
THE FORDING of Jaguar—a multibillion dollar American adventure aimed at returning aggression and thoroughness to a mighty but moribund British marque—comes close to early blooming with this year's parade of XJ8 sedans. Gone is that venerable Bede of Jaguar power plants, a once gloriously polished, aluminum sculpted in-line six that over several decades devolved into a death wish. In its place, a 32-valve V-8 designed and reared in England, with the exception of one crankshaft key from Detroit. It is superior by large gobs of muscle to the 245-horsepower six of yesteryore that, in its glory years, whenever out of the shop and momentarily exorcised of mechanical demons, was capable of adding considerable salt and vinegar to our travels. Meanwhile, Jaguar's awful V-12 engine, a hangover from the old days and the majestic but heavy-handling XJS, has been condemned to extinction. Presumably buried at sea to perform buoy-mooring chores while assisting expansion of the Whitstable oyster beds. The old four-speed automatic that never quite got it in terms of hunt, surge and hesitation whenever driver demands became, well, demanding, also has gone away. Now there's a thinking, five-speed ZF automatic, plus a Daimler-Benz transmission for the supercharged version of the XJ8. Both deliver sophisticated initial response and mid-range urgency that is "Masterpiece Theatre" in motion.

Steering and handling are no longer stiffer than Britain's infamous upper lips. There's a drive-by-wire throttle management system electronically coupled to traction controls that will tame the giddy slips and spins of Britain's national pastime: Bad-weather driving. A simpler, lighter multiplex electronics system has banished Jaguar's primal electricals along with several hundred Lucas jokes. These cars will go 100,000 miles between plug changes, 10,000 miles between oil changes and a lifetime (yours or the car's) between timing adjustments and transmission fluid changes. Consequently, reliability and durability—as measured by diminishing warranty claims and tall leaps in recent J.D. Power customer surveys—indicate that quality, value and thorough assembly have been exhumed from abysmal to

precisely where they should be for a \$55,000 luxury motor car.

Yet, as important as bad things ripped out, is the vital issue of what good things are left of the old XJ6. Looks and lines, which in the past were about the only reason for owning a Jaguar, have been caressed without damaging the allure of the double grille and four-headlight nacelles, part of the XJ allure for 30 years. Interior leathers and woods are premium, and the craftsmanship of their assembly forms an interior that is fine furniture.

Above all, the Jaguerness of it all, the sense of personal elegance while traveling first class at extraordinary speeds, has sustained. Ford, blessedly, hasn't mucked with anything proven. Just smashed the bugs. It has preserved a heritage and is actually making it better. Would that Ford could do the same with British cooking. This new breed of Jaguar is actually a litter, four XJ cubs replacing the XJ6 series. There's a standard-wheelbase XJ8, a



long-wheelbase XJ8L, a super-luxury Vanden Plas and a supercharged XJR. Prices start at \$54,750 for the base XJ8 and peak at \$67,400 for the blown, high performance version. Two engines are available. One is a 4.0-liter, aluminum-block V-8 transplanted from the Jaguar XK8 sports car. Breathing through its own nostrils, it develops 290 horsepower. Then there's the super charged, intercooled engine of the XJR that was our test car. It is ventilated by an Eaton blower that helps snort out an incredible 370 horsepower. And that's a bunch more than even a Chevrolet Corvette.

Outside, what is basically a big, front-engine, rear-drive sedan doesn't get more tasteful than this. From a pleasantly abbreviated rear to a hood that rolls forward and down like some friendly prairie, distinction is with the very lightly chiseled edges of the passenger compartment and the voluptuous rounds of ends and silhouette. The XJR is set aside from less snappy siblings by a self-assured look that is handsome with a whisper of menace. That's created by reductions of chrome around ends and the radiator, five-spoke alloys instead of much busier wheels on the XJ8s, and low profile Pirelli tires. Also a mesh grille that glances back to the saddle-tanked, wire-wheeled SS100 two-seaters of the '30s.

The new interior is elegant and charming, side air bags have been added, and many of the borrowings—such as a pillow-padded center console and a wood-faced oval for gearshift and radio and heater control—are from the XK8 sports car. Superb leathers, places for stuffing stuff without making doors look like shopping carts, and thick insulation from outside din produce a distinct sense of hushed

privacy. Downslides. Instruments are buried deep beneath the dashboard cowl, making them difficult to read in a permanent gloaming. The wood trim is equally murky, and we'd suggest a quick return to the reddish browns favored by most everybody else in the luxury motor car business.

As there's a fractional lowering of the roof line, plus an expansion of trunk space with no change in overall length, big persons riding in the back will find their quarters and hindquarters crunched and over-cozy. They'll be the first to yelp against Jaguar's claim that this is a five-passenger car. But for you, the enthusiast, to heck with them. For few motoring hoots quite match the distinctive rush of driving a Jaguar XJR and enjoying its powerful aplomb; of relishing the apparent paradox of a weighty, sedate sedan that, on command, becomes a four-door demon.

Hard acceleration will make the rear tires sing a song of torque and supercharging. None but the brave—with the exception of something like a Porsche Carrera or a Corvette—will glower at an XJR at a stoplight because it will swoosh to 60 mph in less than six seconds. Of greater importance, such pace is perfectly matched by the efficiency of the car's brakes, steering, chassis stiffness and suspension.

In the animal kingdom, a jaguar is one of the fastest things on four feet. In the concrete jungle, a Jaguar goes one better, as the quickest production sedan on four wheels. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



03.1.1998

Socializing sociology

Guide to Sociology, by Lord Runciman

Reviewed by Samuel Brittan

THE WORST insult that an economist can deliver is to say that someone is a "journalist" and the next worst that he or she is a "sociologist."

The best response to the first charge is to own up to it if one has the privilege of writing for the press. But the second reflects little credit on those who make it. For, given their own record in explaining events, economists are in no position to throw stones at another social science.

Sociology is indeed the more interesting of the two subjects because it deals in principle with the most important structural features of human societies, such as the location of power, the similarities and diversities between different human groups and the forces making for institutional change.

Lord Runciman has written a guide to the subject which can be regarded in two different ways. Officially it is an introduction although it will probably be of most benefit to someone of any age who has picked up at least a smattering of the social sciences and is feeling perplexed. At another level it embodies the author's mature reflections on human change and constancy.

Runciman wastes little space trying to differentiate sociology from the other social sciences, but regards them all as complementary ways of studying human affairs. While so many modern sociologists concentrate on questionnaire studies confined to the period of the post-war welfare state, he roams with enviable ease through anthropology and history and is not afraid to put his classical education to good use. His book has the advantage of not being an American style blockbuster. On the contrary, it is concise and well-written in the traditional way: one reaches the end wanting more.

The author is one of the most worldly, and distinguished, sociologists. He has pursued a parallel and successful career in business, is deputy chairman of the UK's Financial Services Authority and has found time to chair the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice as well as serve for 20 years as chairman of the Child Poverty Group.

As one would expect, he is not easily deceived. He is the first to agree that there are strictures to be levelled, not against the subject matter of

sociology, but the way it is all too often pursued. What are the worst suspicions that you have ever had of sociologists? That they are "a bunch of self-appointed arbiters of the existing order who are neither clever enough to be philosophers nor knowledgeable enough to be historians."

Runciman finds an uncomfortable amount of truth in such remarks. Indeed, he adds some of his own. He has totted up the number of his academic colleagues whose researches were "unmistakably connected with a life-long allegiance to the Labour Party" (and I would add, Old Labour at that). Some of many sociologists into AM's



and PM's attitude merchants and platitude merchants. There is some publicly testable knowledge about human affairs which reflects more than personal prejudices. The particular insight he brings is the evolutionary one. This affects the study of human groups in two ways. In a strict biological aspect we can learn something about human nature for instance the mixture of altruism and selfishness which are everywhere found together.

But he also extends the basic Darwinian idea of inheritance with modification to societies. Only those modifications which improve their ability to adapt to their environment become entrenched. The author neither works the evolutionary metaphor too hard, nor claims that it can tell us much about developments in human affairs before they occur. He believes that the distinguishing feature of science is not its predictive value, but that "its conclusions should be prescriptive for all observers" in the light of evidence available to all.

An interesting application is to the fall of the Roman Republic. The best conventional histories explain the particular sequence of events by which Julius Caesar rather than Pompey became master of Rome with the normal combination of luck and judgment. But the

deeper question is: what were the conditions which made the survival of an agricultural, aristocratic republic unlikely and the emergence of personal rule, abetted by a large bureaucracy, highly probable?

In telling this story the author implicitly makes use of a large number of predictive laws of an "if... then" variety. They concern, for instance, the threshold size of empire beyond which an ancient republic could not cope. It would be interesting to have these propositions explicitly set out, even if they could only be done in terms of probabilities. And one would like to know how far these rules still apply, and how far they have to be modified in the light of modern conditions. It may be that any such attempt at formal rules would turn out to be pedantic, trivial or too heavily qualified to be worthwhile. In that case we are back with what Popper called a historical interpretation. There is nothing wrong with that; but it differs from science in that at least some alternative interpretations can live side by side, with no decisive way of choosing between them.

Meanwhile, the utopian, whose schemes can do so much damage, needs to be seen off not with a methodological injunction but with some analysis of why his schemes are likely to produce unexpected and probably disastrous effects. The Social Animal contains the material for doing so. But the reader will have to work out the detail for himself and will not find many cut and dried propositions.

The author cannot be described as one of nature's optimists. He is not alone in believing that human beings need to see themselves as "apes of a particular kind who happen to have evolved a relatively large brain and a remarkable capacity for language." More originally, he reminds us of the principal use to which language has been put: "Chat, gossip, rumour, story-telling, insulting, complaining, commiserating and chattering up." These activities have more to do with getting other people to respond as we wish than with the pursuit of publicly testable knowledge.

Nevertheless, "chat works." This is shown by the curious creeds and movements to which people will devote their lives and the readiness with which they can be recruited to the service of charlatans who know how to flatter their secret desires. In his final sentence Runciman cites a Stoic philosopher, who asked: "Why are

The global tale of human pyromania

Vestal Fire, Stephen J. Pyne

Reviewed by Douglas Palmer

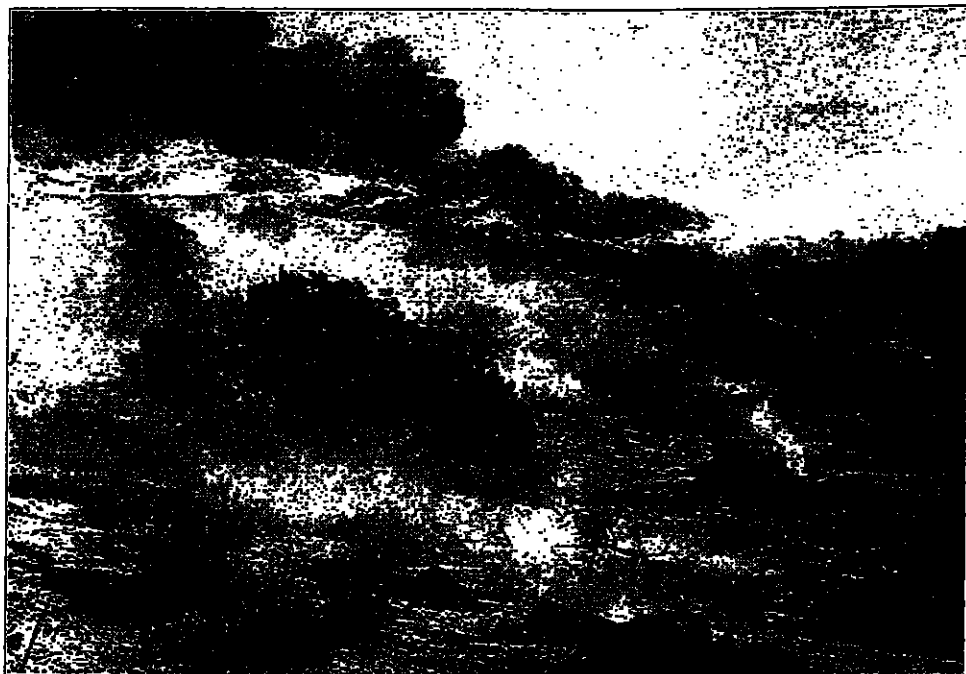
CHILDHOOD FASCINATION and dangerous delight with instant fire, created by striking a match can never be forgotten. The sound, the smell, the colours of the flame and the remarkable heat, that even a small match can generate, readily sears into flesh and memory.

Fire is still fundamental to our lives. We depend upon it for heat, cooked food and the internal combustion engine. And yet, never before have we been so distanced from the direct experience of fire and flame.

In *Vestal Fire*, Stephen J. Pyne reveals the much more direct, extensive and largely forgotten connection that our ancestors had with fire. Human conquest of the land, subjugation of the forest and its "heavily" occupants was achieved by fire.

In the barely historic past, large parts of Europe would have had palls of smog-like smoke drifting down wind similar to that recently experienced in Indonesia. We are hardly in a position to criticise inhabitants of the Third World for "slash and burn" of primeval forest.

Pyne argues that the history and development of our society is built on fire. He tells the terrible tale of how we have used



the fire-storm for subjugating nature and other humans.

Napalm assisted scorched-earth strategies, the torching of European cities in the second world war with chemical fire-bombs and finally the thermonuclear fireball, might have been novel technically, but the idea has an appallingly long history. Our European literature burns brightly with pyrotechnical epithet and simile.

In the Iliad, Homer describes how "...on went Achilles: as a

devouring conflagration rages through the valleys of a parched mountain height, and the thick forest flames to all sides in riotous confusion..."

However, *Vestal Fire* is not all death and destruction because, as early humans quickly realised, fire can liberate as well. Nutrients and water are released, weeds and other pests curbed and phoenix-like new life rises from the ashes. The Old Norse terms landnam,

meaning land-taking, and swiden for the fire-fallow cycle of forest and field, pervade the book just as they came to pervade Neolithic Europe.

Initially, the practice increased plant diversity, especially herbs, shrubs and grasses. An ever changing mosaic with pasture, meadows, scrub and alder swamps. Patterns of ecological change were speeded up by human migration and intervention.

Some changes became permanent, such as the heathlands scattered from the Hebrides to Prussia and Brittany. Their charcoal layers and changing pollen-record a process which started around 3000 BC and continued into mediaeval times.

Vestal Fire vividly recounts the European contribution to the global tale of human pyromania and is part of Stephen Pyne's multi-volume *Cycle of Fire*. Pyne is professor of history at Arizona State University and manages to combine a wealth of information from history, philosophy, literature, physical geography, ecology, agriculture, forestry etc in his multi-disciplinary approach.

This is a wonderful book, but it can be frustrating as the narrative tacks back and forth through so many topics. There are some quagmires, which will only be survived by the more academic reader, but judicious skipping and persistence are amply rewarded. And after reading it, I guarantee that you will become more aware of the potential fire hazard within us all.

Our homes still include some gesture towards a hearth, however functional, and even the most chic cannot resist the vulgar allure of a "real-effect coal fire." Vesta, the Roman goddess of the hearth and keeper of the sacred flame of Mount Olympus, will always be furiously worshipped in our hearts if not in all our hearths. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Gandhi the photographer

By Taron J. Tejpal

WHEN ONE year after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, his wife Sonia published a lavish tribute to him, the famous editor of an English newspaper in Delhi, reviewing the book, wrote: "Unsurprisingly, the loving wife believes her late husband was one part Mother Teresa, one part Salim Ali, one part Jawaharlal Nehru." The sarcasm was aimed not merely at Sonia's eulogy, but also voiced the bewilderment most Indians experience when it comes to figuring out who Rajiv was. His grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru was a visionary; his mother, Indira Gandhi, a politician. But Rajiv? Is it possible, going by growing evidence, that he may

have been essentially just a fine photographer?

That Rajiv Gandhi was a nice guy everyone, friend and foe, agreed. But it was not a particularly impressive qualification for Indian politics in the mid-1980s, and, mixed with naivete, made for a disastrous combination. It was a recipe that saw Rajiv squander the biggest political mandate in India's independent history in the quickest time possible.

Poised into power by the Congress party's brokers after the assassination of his mother, Mrs Indira Gandhi in October 1984, Rajiv led the Congress to a landslide victory in the general elections of December 1984. The period also coincided with the first boom in Indian television, and Rajiv's clean-cut good looks and upbeat homilies made him adored countrywide. But by March 1987, the honeymoon had soured, with allegations about huge kickbacks being received by the Congress from the Swedish company Bofors on a dubious gun deal. Matters were compounded by Rajiv embarking on a foolishly adventurous phase, dispatching Indian troops to Sri Lanka to help quell Tamil separatists. Inevitably, not laurels but body-bags returned home.

By 1989 Rajiv's marriage with the Indian public was over. The Congress was defeated in the general elections, and Rajiv's reputation was in tatters. By the end of May 1991, Rajiv was dead, assassinated by a Tamil suicide bomber. He was 47.

In three generations of his family, Rajiv was the third prime minister and his critics saw him as the least capable. He had neither the steel of Indira, nor the wonderful vision and learning of Jawaharlal. What he had was a winsome ordinariness, a natural inclination for the self-effacing, marginal life. To his credit, he defied 100 years of family history and chose to be a commercial pilot. Rajiv only entered politics because, in 1980, his younger brother Sanjay died in an air crash and his mother Indira made an emotional plea of political loneliness that Rajiv could not ignore.

These facts of Rajiv's life are important because they impact on him as a photographer. Rajiv could take pictures of excellence and subtlety because he was comfortable in the role of observer. In a family where everyone lived in the limelight, he preferred the shadows. In a way he found refuge in photography, and perhaps even some sort of an identity. He was happily married to Sonia Malhotra, whom he had met at Cambridge, and clearly the domestic routines built around his wife and children, Rahul and Priyanka,

constituted his universe. Inevitably, his best pictures are concerned with his private life.

A recent exhibition, organised by the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in Delhi, consisted of 193 beautifully processed and mounted pictures that divided Rajiv's oeuvre into basically three sub-genres: the family cameos; the nature and wildlife pictures; and the very travel and touristy frames of places visited briefly. The worth of the pictures can be placed in virtually the same order.

In her introduction to the book on Rajiv's photographs, Sonia wrote that Rajiv took most of his pictures between 1968, the year of the marriage, and 1984, when he became prime minister. She admits his focus on the family was huge, and "he kept a photographic record of the children through all the stages of their development, starting at the hospital within minutes of their birth." Apparently Indira Gandhi always carried on her travels a miniature fold-out album, and whenever she felt the pictures were getting dated, she would ask Rajiv to renew them.

The fact that his subject matter mattered to him shows. There are very fine portraits of Sonia's father, her sister and one of his brothers, Sanjay, in Kashmir in 1965, that captures an innocence Sanjay never projected once he entered politics. The finest pictures are of Sonia, revealing a kind of vulnerability and light-heartedness that has never been her public face in India. One picture of her, at Turin, in 1966, is particularly haunting: the young girl radiates a melancholy air, presaging the sadness of a life that will never wholly be hers to steer.

Rajiv is as impressive capturing the character of his formidable mother. There is a 1971 picture, where, framed by Gandhi caps, the set of Indira's jaw and fingers reveals a determination that was to humble Pakistan and her opponents later that year. There is



One of Rajiv's favorite pastimes was capturing the image of his mother, Indira

another, ostensibly playful one with little Rahul, in which Indira rests her chin on a large plastic ball, while the boy butts it with his head. Look at it for more than a moment, and you know that she's resting her chin on the globe, the most powerful woman on the planet. At the same time, like a finely sensitive artist, he can reduce her, render her into humility. One of the most memorable photographs shows Indira against the sheer rock of the monolithic Kailash temple in Ellora: tiny, sariclad, scurrying, dwarfed by the ancient carved rock face.

In his nature pictures, Rajiv uses scale to great effect. Several stuck in memory for their expansiveness: the photographs taken from planes: a couple of enchantingly serene ones of the Pangong lake in Ladakh; some mountain and lake-scapes; and two wonderful forest frames run through by silver mountain torrents in

Mizoram, in north-east India. There are others that are memorable for their dimness, in particular one of a plant's tendril that undulates like a striking mamba. Among the wildlife pictures two stand out: one of a tiger in Kanha, fangs bared, eyes riveted dead centre on camera, an aura of primal menace radiating; and the other is of a crocodile's armoured back breaking the water. Bangkok, ominous scales and placid green surface juxtaposed surreally.

Sonia has written about his obsessive interest in photography, and of his preferences. It seems he liked to "shoot by available light, indoors as well as outdoors, and seldom used artificial lighting or reflectors." It seems he was meticulous about maintaining his equipment and photographs, and carefully graded his slides and prints for their worth. According to Sonia, "he rarely cropped a picture," and that it was his "tranquil and unhurried" approach, his attentiveness to detail that "binds his images into a unity, rather than any specific theme or style." She feels Rajiv's photographs radiate "a profound serenity, an awareness open to the patterns of light and colour and to the textures of human existence."

All that is true and reflective of Rajiv the man, and not the politician. It is not surprising then that the most disappointing pictures are his holiday pictures, touristy frames of buildings and strangers, and pseudo romantic photos of poorurchins and working class people. Though technically excellent, they are basically standard-issue exoticism and nothing more. As India's leading photographer, Raghu Rai, says: "He had great possibilities. He had a keen sense of trying to capture a situation, but then it takes years to develop vision and complexity." But Rajiv the photographer was not destined to get that grace period; the politician intervened, and then death knocked early. Yet if you look at the pictures long enough, it is possible to see them as his real legacy. ■

Financial Times Syndication

INVEST IN YOURSELF...

Introductory Program in enhancing will power and concentration

Where?

At the Interfit Health Spa in the Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan.

What is the program about?

The program aims at introducing methods that help enhance positive and productive thinking, strengthen will power, and increase one's concentration potential. Specialized and professional training is provided for the 16 sessions that take place in the evening.

For further information please call 461 5825

Inter
F&T
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HOTEL
INTER-CONTINENTAL
JORDAN

Tyson's

SPORT

Various small advertisements and notices on the right margin, including mentions of 'Tyson's', 'SPORT', and other local businesses.

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 14-20 March

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—The Hammerman
4:30—French Program
5:00—Canon The Adventurer
6:00—Square One
6:30—Neighbours
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovering Magazine
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prisma
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—The Respected Family

SUNDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—Kanan the Adventurer
5:00—Don't Dream
6:00—Skippy
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—American Funniest
8:00—Killing for Living
8:30—People and Places in Africa
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—North And South
11:10—The Upper Hand

MONDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—Kanan the Adventurer
5:00—Tallass
6:00—Riding High
6:30—Neighbours
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope And Gloria
8:00—Perspective
8:30—American Chart Show
9:10—The Burned Bridge



You Bet Your Life, Saturday at 7:35

10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Law & Order
11:10—Baywatch Nights

TUESDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—CRO
4:30—Kanan the Adventurer
5:00—Small Talk
6:30—Border Town
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—A Whole New Ball game

WEDNESDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Mr Bogs
4:30—French Programs
6:00—The Finder
6:30—Neighbours
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Campus Cops

8:00—Traces Of Guilt
8:30—Hollywood Remembers
8:30—History Makers
9:00—Filler
9:10—Kung Fu III
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Ed's Island

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Dinky Di's
2:30—The Prince And The Pauper
2:45—Energy Express
2:45—Animal Show
3:00—French Programs
5:00—NBA
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Big Brother Jake
8:00—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—Great Romance
8:30—Lois & Clark
8:30—Dr. Quinn The Medicine Woman
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Teddy Ruxpin
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Lucky Luke
5:30—Blue Water Dreaming
6:00—Tarzan
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—F.R.I.E.N.D.S.
8:00—Life on the Internet
8:30—The Album Show
9:10—Adventures of Brisco County
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—The Beast (Drama)

Programs are subject to change by JTV



Amman cinemas

- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): *Titanic*
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): *Titanic*
- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): *G.I. Jane*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): *007... Tomorrow*
- Never Dies
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): *Titanic*
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): *Risala Ila Al Wali (Arabic)*
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): *Long Kiss Goodnight*

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

16:30—Arsène Lupin
17:00—Cajou
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'œil de Colomb

DIMANCHE

16:30—Arsène Lupin
17:00—Magazine Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI

16:30—Arsène Lupin
17:00—Thalass
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

16:30—Arsène Lupin
17:00—Savoir plus santé
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Têtes chercheuses

MECRÉDI

16:30—Arsène Lupin
17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

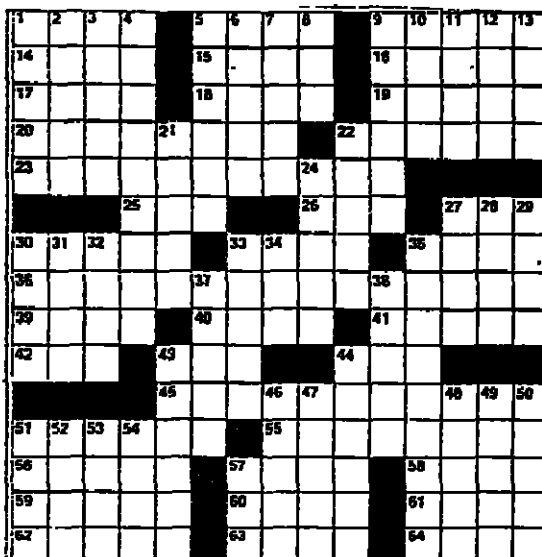
JEUDI

15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Sous vos applaudissements
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

VENDREDI

15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Julie Lescaut
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allà la Terre

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Check
5 Pleasant to the taste
10 Bogus
14 Sender to
15 Amnesia
16 Buzzle
17 — have
18 Send, as payment
19 Grizzly
20 Cap
22 Word game
24 Cuffed
25 Cock
26 Hermit
31 Pressing
34 Rose
37 Hand sheet
39 — poker
41 Leaders
43 Ele on
44 French noggin
48 Happen again
49 Old fire
51 Evident
53 Kneel
55 Mineral
56 Garage
60 Assisted
64 Bewildered
65 Former
67 London
68 Lake
69 Enamel
70 — vital
71 Colored
72 Richards or Taylor
73 Remainder
DOWN
1 Side
2 High jagg
3 Sooner
4 Goodby
5 Night
6 Common verb
7 Big cat
8 Sweet
9 Particular
10 Passee
11 Israeli dance
12 Genes
13 Crowds
14 Rainbow
15 Pate de loi
16 Part of Eur
17 — vital
18 Way taken in traveling
19 Frost
20 Clan symbol
21 Wash lightly
22 Galters
23 Ten comb
24 Strike
25 Brightness
26 Teasdale
27 Fully developed
28 Greek lyric poet
29 Waver
30 Attack
31 School subject
32 Jacob's
33 War
34 Family group
35 Ashen
36 Greek letters
37 Hollow
38 hasten

—THIS WEEK'S—
HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: With the sun in Pisces all week, this is a good time to get involved in projects that will benefit others.

Aries (March 21-April 19). The next few days could be kind of difficult as a tough boss expects the best from you. You may have to scurry to produce that result.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). It looks like an attractive foreigner has an interesting suggestion. You could fall in love without even being able to speak the same language.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). You could be under a bit of tension as you try to make the amount of money you have fit the amount of bills to be paid. This assignment will work best if you have help from another person.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). It looks like you and your partner will hit it off really well. Figure out a way to buy something both of you want, by doing it together.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). It looks like you're going to have a tough job. You'll be doing it with somebody you like, so that'll make it a little easier.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Make a connection with your sweetheart. You'll be immersed in a difficult project. Your full attention will be required to make this thing work, so don't schedule any dates.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'd probably rather stay home in bed than do just about anything else. If you've got a friend nearby, that's even more the case.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). A friend comes to your rescue. He or she offers advice you never would have thought of on your own.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Money is your major concern. You want to spend more than you have on somebody you like a lot.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're in the mood to learn the whole time the sun is in Pisces, so you're going to get a lot done.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It seems like you're putting more into a project than you're getting out. That's OK.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). A friendship could very easily turn into a romance. Make sure you're in the right place to have that happen. If you're having a Birthday This Week: Your theme this year is friends and lovers. Looks like somebody who was one could become the other, and vice versa.

No one can
uproot the
tree
that God has
planted

SOLUTION:

ACROSS
1 Check
5 Pleasant to the taste
10 Bogus
14 Sender to
15 Amnesia
16 Buzzle
17 — have
18 Send, as payment
19 Grizzly
20 Cap
22 Word game
24 Cuffed
25 Cock
26 Hermit
31 Pressing
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51 Evident
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14 Rainbow
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19 Frost
20 Clan symbol
21 Wash lightly
22 Galters
23 Ten comb
24 Strike
25 Brightness
26 Teasdale
27 Fully developed
28 Greek lyric poet
29 Waver
30 Attack
31 School subject
32 Jacob's
33 War
34 Family group
35 Ashen
36 Greek letters
37 Hollow
38 hasten

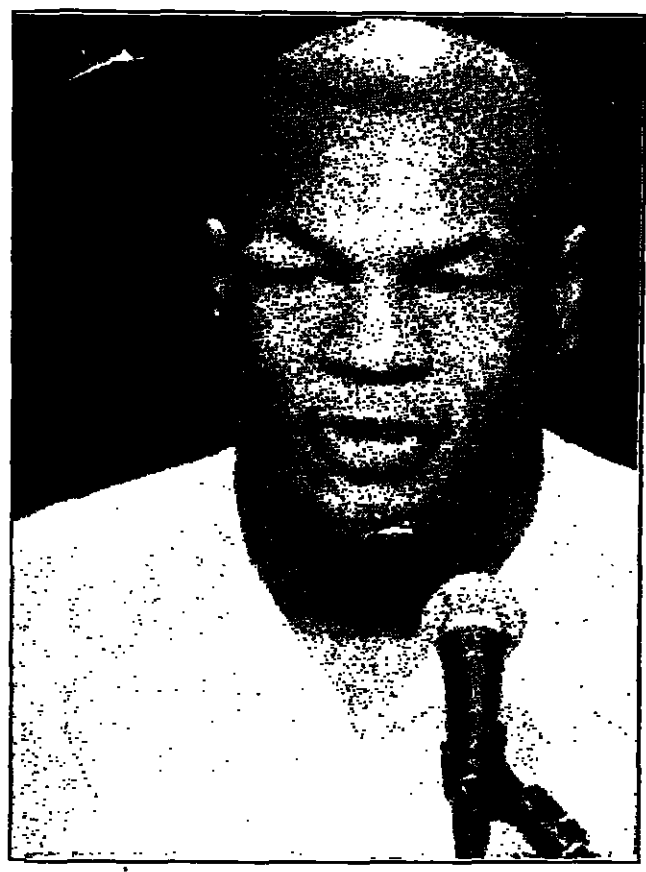
Tyson sues King for \$100 million

New York—Former heavy-weight boxing champion Mike Tyson filed a \$100 million lawsuit against Don King, alleging the promoter cheated him out of tens of millions of dollars over more than a decade. The lawsuit filed in US District Court in Manhattan named King and his companies as defendants, alleging they acted as one entitled to enrich King at the expense of avulnurable, unsophisticated boxer who could not understand contracts. Despite his gross conflicts of interest, King approved one-sided, unconscionable and oppressive agreements between his companies and a boxing industry that wanted to benefit from the huge value of Tyson's fights, the lawsuit alleged. Peter Fleming Jr., a lawyer for King, said he had no comment on the lawsuit. Tyson is currently banned from boxing until at least July for biting heavy-weight champ Evander Holyfield in the ring. He has earned an estimated \$140 million in six fights since he was released

from an Indiana prison in 1995 after serving time for rape. The boxer has been cheated out of fair participation in deals worth more than \$100 million and has been subjected to a "pattern of fraudulent conduct" that has been "financially devastating" to Tyson, the lawsuit said. King had even surrounded the boxer with an entourage of accountants and advisers that were actually King puppets acting in the interests of the promoter and his companies, it alleged. The true loyalties were proven when Tyson recently separated himself from the King camp and a new accountant asked Tyson's former bookkeeper for Tyson's records. "I can't hand them over" because the files are in cabinets owned by Don King, the lawsuit alleged. The fraud began almost as soon as King entered Tyson's life in 1986, when Tyson was being managed by Jimmy Jacobs and Bill Cayton, the lawsuit said. Jacobs

died in 1987 and Tyson fired Cayton in 1988. King and his companies then served as Tyson's manager, confidant, adviser and promoter from 1988 to 1998, directing and developing every aspect of Tyson's career, the lawsuit said. At the time, the lawsuit said, Tyson was a young professional fighter without any formal education, and King was an experienced boxing promoter and manager with a veritable army of professional advisers. "King knew that Tyson had a fundamentally inability to read and understand contracts and fully appreciate the effect of business transactions on his life," it alleged. King found ways to carve up Tyson's purse so that little of the fight money made it to the boxer, the lawsuit said. Tyson was required to pay consulting fees to King's wife, son and son-in-law and other fees to King's daughter, who was president of the Mike Tyson Fan Club, the lawsuit said. Tyson also paid for travel expenses incurred by King and those who traveled with him to meet Tyson as well as the cost of security, corporate cars, renovations at King's businesses,

unusually large purses to other undercard fighters promoted by King and fees for King's legal battles, the lawsuit said. The lawsuit alleged that King even took advantage of Tyson's imprisonment, visiting him and persuading him to sign contracts when he knew the boxer had no access to an attorney. The last visit was five days before his release. Next week, King is scheduled to go on trial in federal court in Manhattan on charges that he and Don King Productions had faked a contract with Lloyd's of London insurance company to collect \$350,000 in non-existent training expenses for a canceled 1991 bout between Julio Cesar Chavez and Harold Brazier. In an earlier trial on the insurance fraud charge that ended with a deadlocked jury, Chavez, the former World Boxing Council super-light-weight champion, testified that King paid him only \$80,000 to train and never told him about an insurance claim. During that trial, Tyson sat in the courtroom in a show of support for King. King's other companies named in Tyson's lawsuit include DKP Corp. and Kingvision Pay.

MONDIAL
NEWS

Finalists can call third goalkeeper

PARIS—A third goalkeeper can be called into World Cup squads before and during the finals in the event of injury, organizers said. The move applies to any 22-strong squad with one of their two goalkeepers injured. Squads containing three goalkeepers do not qualify. FIFA's World Cup committee made the decision at a two-day workshop in Paris between organizers and representatives of the 32 finalists.

Klinsmann sets sight on US after World Cup

BONN—Germany captain Juergen Klinsmann is thinking of playing in the United States when he quits English Premiership side Tottenham at the end of the season. "It's an option after the World Cup," Klinsmann told Kicker magazine. However, the 33-year-old said he would take no decision about his future before the World Cup finals in France in June-July. He said his split with Spurs manager Christian Gross was inevitable. Klinsmann said last Friday he would leave Spurs because he could not agree with what the manager was doing. "Christian and I obviously have totally different opinions about things," he said last week. Gross, the former Grasshopper coach, has introduced a much stricter regime at Tottenham, including players staying in hotels on nights before matches. This has not been a popular move with the club's big-money stars. Gross has also introduced training sessions on the morning of home matches. Klinsmann has had a poor time since returning to Spurs, where he had an incredible first year before leaving for Bayern Munich. He has scored only one goal in seven games in a team that has managed only 26 goals in 29 Premiership games.

French judges warned on hooligans

PARIS—The French Justice Ministry warned prosecuting magistrates to watch out for hooliganism throughout the country during the soccer World Cup. The ministry said it should not be expected that trouble would be limited to the 10 stadiums hosting the event.

"Incidents or troubles may occur during the event anywhere in the country and especially during movements of national teams and their fans or in the cities where teams will be accommodated," the ministry said in a statement sent to magistrates. The French law has recently been changed to allow magistrates to ban trouble makers from attending sporting events even if incidents in which they had been involved took place away from stadiums. It will be up to magistrates to decide whether the offence is "directly linked with a sporting event," the ministry added. Magistrates have already been assigned to each of the 10 World Cup stadiums and have the power to send trouble makers to court instantly. The ministry said that acts of racism or xenophobia around stadiums should be handled "with the utmost severity."



This Bulls' Dynasty has a very short shelf life

TAKE A picture because the Chicago Bulls' dynasty, as we have known it under the leadership of Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and coach Phil Jackson, is making its last regular-season appearance at Madison Square Garden, Sunday, against the Knicks. Jordan has said he's retiring if Jackson doesn't return; Jackson's demise was negotiated before this season even began, and Pippen is headed out of Chicago as a free agent in search of his just monetary reward. Dennis Rodman, too, will be packing up his burlesque act and hitting the road. The key remaining player will be forward Toni Kukoc, who often has suited in his sixth-man role since Jordan ended his baseball career to return to the NBA three years

ago. Recently, Kukoc moved into the starting lineup at power forward, replacing Rodman. The Bulls have gone 7-1 in that stretch, and Kukoc's production and attitude have improved. Rodman is another story. He started the Bulls' past two games in place of injured center Luc Longley, who is expected to return to the starting line-up Sunday. But Rodman has made it clear he's not happy coming off the bench. "It's one of those periods; I'm bored," Rodman said. "But I can't sit on the bench. I've got to be on the floor, out there. I can't sit for the first eight or nine minutes."

Rodman's minutes are down in the past eight games from (35.2 to 30.5), and his league-leading rebounding has fallen off from 15.1 per game to 13.8, including three single-digit efforts. Kukoc's stats are up across the board in minutes (28.8 to 31.0), scoring (12.6 to 13.9), rebounds (4.1 to 5.0) and assists (4.1 to 5.6). Jackson has been a model of patience when it comes to tolerating Rodman's indiscretions, but lately, he's expressed concern over Rodman's repeated tardiness, saying: "I want to see an attitude shift. He is lagging behind everyone else. Dennis has been late to practice and he is not attentive. Dennis knows what has to be done. I don't think I have gotten Dennis' attention yet. He has to wake up. He has to come to grips with the responsibility he has to this ballclub." It was assumed Rodman would return to the starting line-up quickly, but Kukoc remains the starter.

"It's a great option to have," Jackson said. "We are not desperate. We all know what it takes to win a championship." In the strangest move at the trade deadline two weeks ago, the Bulls shipped Jason Caffey, who had performed well as a backup rebounder to Rodman, to the Golden State Warriors for David Vaughn, who since has been waived. At first, Bulls General Manager Jerry Krause said the trade would make Rodman more responsible by removing his safety net. Hearing that explanation, Rodman said Krause "should keep his mouth closed." Said Rodman, "I'm going to be the same old Dennis. That is a bad strategy. They should keep the team together, no matter what." At the time Caffey was traded,

Krause suggested it also would force Jackson to give Kukoc more playing time. "Phil and I talked about the fact we needed to get (Kukoc) more time, and he has merited it," Krause said. "When you don't have somebody (Caffey) who is going to play a certain amount of minutes, it is addition by subtraction." That's one way to look at it. But Caffey was effective in limited minutes, and Rodman was more effective as a starter. Only Kukoc has benefited, and no one can say the Bulls improved themselves for the playoffs. If anything, it will be more difficult for them to add a sixth title. If subtraction is the goal, well, there will be plenty of that when this season ends.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Écrivains publics

Conflit aux marches du Palais

Malgré le permis du Ministère de l'Intérieur, les écrivains publics ne sont pas autorisés à travailler devant le nouveau Palais de justice. Chassés régulièrement, ils reviennent chaque jour et réclament... justice.

Depuis plus de six mois, les écrivains publics devant le nouveau Palais de justice se trouvent face à un dilemme : devenir chômeurs ou défilier le gouvernement. En avril dernier, les choses se sont brouillées entre eux et le Ministère de la Justice. Celui-ci décidait en effet de les empêcher d'exercer devant le Palais.

Cette brusque décision n'a pas manqué d'exaspérer les écrivains publics. Ils invoquent pour leur défense des permis obtenus auprès du Ministère de l'Intérieur et même renouvelés début février 98. « Tout est légal, nous avons le droit de nous trouver là », clament-ils (pour obtenir ce permis, il suffit d'être Jordanien et d'avoir plus de 18 ans).

Pour faire entendre leur cause, les écrivains publics ont

choisi de s'adresser au Premier ministre. Peine perdue : « Nous avons envoyé une lettre officielle mais Majali a déplacé le problème vers le Ministère de la Justice », regrettent-ils. La halle est donc dans le camp du Ministère.

Pas de syndicat

L'administration judiciaire ne récusait pas le point de vue des écrivains publics sur les permis. Le sous-secrétaire préfère ne pas parler de discord et justifie la position de son Ministère : « Ces permis permettent leur présence devant l'ancien Palais de justice. Au sein du nouveau Palais, nous avons créé un Bureau de service public avec des employés qui aident les citoyens ». Arguments légèrement empreints de mauvaise foi

puisqu'il n'y a pas de syndicat.

Reste que pour beaucoup, la présence des écrivains publics est indispensable : « Dans le Bureau du Ministère, on nous donne des formulaires à remplir puis nous devons nous débrouiller. Avec l'écrivain public, c'est différent. Il est disposé à nous aider et à nous conseiller, assure un particulier Abu Ali. Je lui explique mon affaire. Puis il décide quelle est la demande officielle nécessaire : procuration, caution... ».

Malheureusement, ce n'est pas la rue qui fait la loi. Le conflit est toujours là et les écrivains publics ne savent pas quoi faire. Assis derrière leurs petites tables en bois improvisées sur le trottoir, stylos, papiers, machines à écrire au garde-vous, ils enragent : « C'est une décision draconienne, s'insurge Youssel, dans la profession depuis 12 ans, et personne ne nous soutient. Nous n'avons même pas d'association pour nous protéger ».

Seuls deux ou trois écrivains n'ont pas l'air résignés. Karim, par exemple, écrivain public depuis 1986, rechigne à se soumettre à l'oukase du Ministère : « Souvent on nous fait déguiser, nous partons sans opposition mais le lendemain, je reviens parce que c'est mon seul moyen de subsistance ».

« Le seul moyen, renchérit Ismail, un autre rebelle, nous devons faire vivre nos familles et nos enfants. Cette décision nous prive de notre gagne-pain ». Ils ont tous à peu près le même train de vie (environ 200 dinars par mois) et craignent que le Ministère maintienne coûte que coûte sa décision. Comment comptent-ils s'en sortir ?

« Dans l'immédiat, nous allons résister à cette pression et continuer à travailler malgré tout », veut croire Karim, en sachant bien que ce n'est pas la meilleure des solutions. À côté de lui, un autre écrivain lance un cri de désespoir : « Nous nous abandonnons à Dieu. Il n'y a de force et de puissance qu'en Dieu ».

Nahed Al-Khlout



Les écrivains publics attendent un arrangement à l'amiable avec le Ministère de la Justice.

L'iconographie chez les Nabatéens par Véronique Abu-Nijmeh



La réticence à représenter les divinités sous forme humaine est une constante des peuples sémitiques qui les distingue de l'Antiquité occidentale. Obéissant à ces traditions aniconistes, les Nabatéens à l'origine ne représentaient leurs divinités que sous forme de blocs de pierre, les bêtes, les habitacles des dieux. L'aniconisme s'est perpétué tout au long de l'histoire nabatéenne non sans subir quelques altérations. Néanmoins au I^{er} siècle av. J.-C., peut-être sous le règne d'Arétas III Philhellène (87-62 av. J.-C.), la culture nabatéenne cède peu à peu au syncrétisme et admet avec l'apport de divinités helléniques les représentations anthropomorphiques qui caractérisent l'art grec. C'est ainsi que l'on observe un amalgame étonnant de sculptures conformes au rigorisme de la tradition arabe et de sculptures figurant des personnages aux traits

expressifs moulés dans les conventions de l'art hellénistique.

La déesse égyptienne Isis, dont Pétra était l'un des centres culturels les plus importants, fut honorée sous des représentations très diverses. Ci-contre à gauche sa forme bédouine, reconnaissable à sa frise aux feuilles losangées et son visage stylisé par des yeux en étoile dont l'orbite devait recevoir des incrustations en pierres précieuses, et une bande centrale en guise de nez. Fort différente est la statuette découverte dans le temple des Lions ailés (ci-contre à droite) figurant la déesse, en deuil de son compagnon Osiris. Son attitude rappelle celle de la déesse grecque Déméter accablée par la disparition de sa fille. Cette variété iconographique correspond certainement aux différents aspects de la déesse mais répond surtout aux besoins d'une clientèle hétéroclite organisée en communautés ayant chacune son sanctuaire propre. ●



Nouvelles du Pays

État des lieux

Femme libérée à pas comptés

Malgré les efforts des multiples associations, la situation de la femme Jordanienne évolue lentement. Sa vie politique, économique et sociale reste encore largement cloisonnée dans une société masculine et conservatrice.



Les femmes ont le droit de vote depuis 1974 mais leur accès aux responsabilités politiques demeure limité.

laisser les femmes voter ou se présenter à des élections n'est pas à les voir siéger aux côtés des hommes. Le Roi Hussein, en monarque éclairé, a su rééquilibrer un peu la balance en nommant trois femmes dans le nouveau Sénat. Mais sauf la maire d'un village près de Jérash, les responsabilités poli-

tiques des femmes s'arrêtent là. Pour forcer l'obstacle d'une société conservatrice, les organisations de femmes ont lancé depuis le début de l'année une vaste campagne pour imposer un quota de 20% de femmes dans la Chambre des députés. Mais le principe de cette discrimination positive est loin

d'être acquis auprès de parlementaires réticents. Il y a quelques mois, l'un d'eux affirmait sans rire que les femmes devaient quitter leur travail pour mieux élever leurs enfants !

Plus de divorces

Les dirigeants mâles ont beau se persuader qu'il n'y a pas de discrimination à l'égard des femmes, les faits et les chiffres sont contre eux. Aujourd'hui encore elles ne représentent que 13,6% de la population au travail en baisse de quatre points en dix ans. Parallèlement le chômage des femmes est presque deux fois et demi plus important que celui des hommes. Bref le cliché de la femme au foyer a la vie dure.

Enfin les Jordaniennes subissent toute une série de discriminations juridiques, notamment face aux crimes d'honneur : le code pénal donne le droit à un mari de tuer sa femme prise en flagrant délit

d'adultère. L'inverse est impossible.

Pourtant la Constitution stipule que « les Jordaniennes sont égales devant la loi » et qu'il n'y a pas de discrimination entre eux sur le plan des droits et des devoirs qu'elles soient leur race, leur langue ou leur religion. Manque... le « sexe ». Certes, la Jordanie a ratifié un bon nombre de conventions internationales sur les Droits de l'homme, y compris celle concernant la suppression de toute forme de discrimination à l'égard des femmes. Mais ces ratifications sont souvent accompagnées de réserves. Certains articles apparaissent incompatibles avec la loi islamique du pays. Autant dire que ces textes restent vides de sens et qu'ils influencent très peu les politiques et les mentalités dominantes en cours.

Tout n'est pas noir. Au fil du temps, les femmes jordaniennes ont su se créer un espace de liberté sous la chape de plomb d'une société machiste et tribale. Aujourd'hui elles sont de plus en plus nombreuses à ne pas se marier (30% en 1972, 45% en 1990) ou même à divorcer, surtout parmi les plus jeunes. Ensuite, le taux de fécondité a sensiblement diminué passant de 7,9 enfants par femme en 1972 à 5,6 en 1990. Parmi les raisons de cette baisse, l'utilisation plus généralisée de la pilule (plus de la moitié des femmes mariées). Enfin, la femme jordanienne a réalisé des progrès considérables quant à son éducation : baisse de l'analphabétisme et augmentation du nombre des jeunes filles qui poursuivent des études supérieures. Au total, pas de révolution, pas de cataclysme. Pendant que les mentalités évoluent lentement, les femmes se montrent plus patientes que jamais. ■

Suleiman Sweiss et Yandick Laine

Les Françaises s'adaptent mais ne plient pas

Être étrangère et épouse d'un Jordanien. Cinq Françaises mariées à des musulmans témoignent de leur vie de femme.

Martine, mariée depuis 22 ans : « Au début, il ne faut pas faire trop de concessions parce qu'après, la belle-famille vous en demande trop. Ils peuvent se montrer encombrants. Il faut savoir mettre des limites. Par exemple, ils savent très bien que je ne suis pas prête à passer mon temps dans la cuisine ». F., mariée depuis 17 ans : « Quand on est jeune, on est prêt à s'adapter à tout. Ensuite, il y a des habitudes sociales qui dérangent, le pouvoir de l'homme, cette autorité sur tout qui est révoltante. C'est l'homme qui décide, la femme ici n'a rien à dire et je ne sais pas si elle réalise qu'elle pourrait changer les choses ».

Françoise, mariée depuis 17 ans : « Sa famille aurait préféré une Jordanienne ou une Palestinienne mais à partir du moment où il avait décidé, il n'y avait pas de problème. Ils ont accepté que je sois différente. Et nous avons su imposer notre couple : hors de question de passer tous les vendredis en famille ou de

passer deux soirées par semaine chez eux. (...) Par rapport à la situation de la femme jordanienne, les choses pourraient mieux se passer si les hommes voulaient être honnêtes mais en raison de la mauvaise interprétation de la loi islamique, la femme est toujours soumise à l'autorité du père ou du mari ». Bvelyne, en Jordanie depuis un an et demi : « Ici, la femme française doit être forte et sûre d'elle. C'est très important de pouvoir rester soi-même et aussi d'être en parfait équilibre avec son conjoint. (...) La situation de la femme est catastrophique tant dans les milieux pauvres que dans les milieux aisés. On est en enferme dans un rôle de séduction. C'est une société qui souffre de conformisme ». M., mariée depuis 4 ans : « J'ai connu des difficultés avec ma belle-famille que j'ai dépassées : c'étaient des invitations pour des repas ou des demandes qui passaient toujours par mon mari et jamais par moi. Parfois la famille c'est un poids. Mais mon mari a su très bien mettre les choses au point. De toute façon, le mariage mixte, c'est une bataille dans les deux sens, il faut faire accepter la pièce rapportée ».

Journées de la francophonie du 14 au 20 mars

Doucement mais sûrement la francophonie progresse en Jordanie. Le français confirme sa deuxième place dans les langues étrangères du pays, bien entendu loin derrière l'anglais. Près de 32.000 élèves le choisissent durant leur scolarité. Dans les écoles publiques, les enfants peuvent commencer dès la huitième. Et lors du tawjihi 1999, il sera ajouté à la liste des matières optionnelles de la section littéraire. Ensuite, 530 étudiants passent actuellement une licence de français dans les universités de Jordanie et du Yarmouk. Pourquoi le français plaît autant ? Jean-Marc Mangiante, l'attaché linguistique au Centre culturel français, « croit énormément à l'argument politique dans l'évolution de la francophonie ». Les récentes positions de la France favorables aux Arabes dans le processus de paix et la crise irakienne ont suscité beaucoup de sympathie dans la population locale. « Parallèlement, explique l'attaché, la francophonie est en recul en Israël car la position de la France y est mal perçue ». À cela s'ajoutent dans le court terme toutes les opérations de promotion, telles que ces journées de la francophonie soutenues par l'ensemble des ambassades francophones de Jordanie. ■

Conférence

Francophonie : langue des autres, par Salah Stetie. Cet ancien ambassadeur, poète et écrivain libanais a reçu en 1995 le Grand Prix de la Francophonie par l'Académie française.

Samedi 14 mars à 18h30. Nouvelle municipalité. Ras-el-Ain.

Littérature

Langue et présence à l'histoire, par Gaston Cherpillod (ci contre), écrivain suisse qui nous présentera son œuvre.

Lundi 16 mars à 18h30 à la Mairie d'Amman.

Cinéma

Le fleuve aux grands yeux, un court-métrage canadien de Frédéric Back (1993), de 24 mn sur le fleuve Saint-Laurent.

Divas, film français de Jean-Jacques Beineix (1980), sous-titré en arabe. Un jeune facteur par amour pour une cantatrice se retrouve aux mains d'une bande de malfaiteurs.

Mardi 17 à partir de 20h30 à la Mairie d'Amman.



Concert

De sa formation classique au plus haut niveau, Emmanuel Bex a tiré un bagage technique irréprochable et un amour pour l'écriture et les arrangements. En 1995, l'Académie du Jazz lui décerne le Prix Django Reinhardt. En 1997, il s'associe à Sylvain Beuf (saxophone) et François Lizeau (batterie) pour former un trio. Dimanche 15 mars à 20h30, à l'Hôtel Méridien. Bex Trio jouera des compositions originales écrites par Emmanuel Bex.

Fresque

Quatre cents « fenêtres » de paysage occidental et quinze autres de paysage oriental. La fusion visuelle des deux se traduit sur le mur comme un message. L'œuvre sera, à travers ce nouveau paysage, une réflexion sur les cultures, les langues qui se rencontrent dans cette « trame humaine ». Paul de Gobert exposera ses œuvres préparatoires à son projet de fresque murale (dessins, pastels et toiles de paysages français et jordaniens). Le vernissage sera suivi d'une conférence de l'artiste sur le thème et les aspects techniques de cette œuvre ainsi que de ses autres réalisations.

Vernissage, vendredi 20 mars à 17h00, conférence à 18h00. Nouvelle municipalité. Ras-el-Ain.

Contes

Un concours d'illustration de contes francophones traduits en arabe pour les élèves de 7 à 12 ans des écoles jordaniennes. Vernissage et remise des prix à 10h00, vendredi 20 mars à la nouvelle municipalité.



C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré à l'acteur français Alain Delon. Trois hommes à abattre, un film de Jacques Deray (1980), sous-titré en arabe. Une nuit, Gerfaut découvre un blessé à bord d'une voiture. De sauveteur, il devient l'homme à abattre.

Lundi 16 mars à 18h30 et 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Renseignements au 637009 ou 636445. Entrée libre.

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.

THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

A lack of understanding and appreciation, barriers to software growth in Jordan:

Grasping the actual benefits of software

Amman (Star)—IN JORDAN, just like all developing countries, there is a great potential of growth in the fields of analysis consultancy, feasibility studies and so on. New, modern projects, in all fields, require these services as a key to their success.

However, most large scale projects start operation without enough emphasis on these aspects. Millions of dinars are poured into the buildings, equipment, machinery and material aspects. Little funds are allocated to non-material, but equally if not more important aspects.

This is a very general statement that applies to any business. But how does it affect the field of software development?

Just like all other fields, people need to become aware of this non-material aspect of the business—i.e. software.

Customers are more than willing to receive a price quote or offer for hardware, detailing its specifications. Computers are material

things, which customers can understand. They feel that they can realize the benefits of ownership immediately.

As for software, customers have to pay now and receive benefits later. Customers pay for analysis, design and development. It takes months of testing and modifications



before the user can depend on it. Most people are not aware of the hidden costs of development, nor are they aware of the many benefits of the development of tailor-made software for their business.

Normally, there is a great gap in prices of similar category software in Jordan. Let's take the example of "accounting systems". There are accounting packages that sell for as low as JD 100, whereas there are others which rise in price to over JD

5000. This wide gap in price puzzles the buyer.

Of course, there is a reason for this price difference. Software is priced according to programming complexity, time spent on analysis, testing, the number of packages sold and the number of users.

Obviously, there are many factors involved. So, it is not easy to compare and the buyer gets puzzled and cannot decide which package satisfies his/her needs.

It normally frustrates software developers to explain to customers that they are

offering them a package for JD 1,500 although it was sold to another customer for around JD 300. This is not highway robbery, but normal procedure when it comes to software. It all depends on customer size, number of users, development and modification time required to tailor-make packages according to customer requirements.

Until tailor-made packages gain proper appreciation, customers and software developers in Jordan will continue to face great difficulty in mar-

Computer & IT companies !:

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 4648298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.Jo with your news and views.

Secure your valuable data for 30 years, on reliable PC optical cartridges:

NEC PD Optical Drive 650MB

By Star staff writer
STORAGE MEDIA has developed enormously in the past few years.

Nowadays, computer users can enjoy the wonders of removable optical cartridges capable of handling huge amounts of data.

For users at all levels, a mid-range, reliable optical drive is a very attractive option. This is the case with the new PD Optical drive from NEC, capable of storing 650 MB.

NEC claims that the media used (cartridges) are Phase-Change optical media, which offers non-contact recording. This results in exceptional reliability. The optical read/write head never touches the media.

Unlike floppy disks and magnetic tapes for which read/write heads are in constant

movement across the recording medium (the disks or tapes).

Phase-Change optical media also is a non-magnetic recording medium which ensures that the stray magnetic fields can never alter your data.

All these features of Phase-Change media culminate in the fact that you can enjoy more than 30 years of safe storage, ensuring more than 2 million write/erase cycles.

As removable and rewritable media, the cartridges are ideal for storage of graphic and medical images, data files and system backups. They represent a viable alternative to tape backup devices, and the user gains the advantage of random access.

Also, added advantage is the ability to read all stan-

dard CD-ROM formats, including music CDs (digital audio), CD ROM modes 1 and 2, Photo CDs, recordable CDs, CD-ROM XA and Video CDs can all be read on NEC PC Optical drives.

Naturally, PD Optical cartridges are much faster than floppy disk drives, as far as access rates are concerned, and because their speed is similar to standard hard disks, users can utilize the Optical drive as an extension to hard disk storage, placing seldom-used applications on PD Optical disks for easy reach.

Smart Systems is offering the NEC Tow PD Optical drive at an attractive price of JD 250.

For more information, contact Smart Systems on telephone 5539329, fax 5534329 or email smart-sys@go.com.jo.

SmartLink 56Kbps modems arrives

KAYYALI CORP. for computers and electronics is the authorized distributor for Archtek America Corp. products in Jordan and has introduced the SmartLink 56 Voice series to the local market.

These modems provide a speed of 56Kbps, built on the design adapted by Archtek from Lucent Technologies, the global telecommunications giant. It also includes USA components of an AT&T Chipset.

SmartLink modems support the latest communication protocols and standards, including the ITU for vis.27/



v29bis, Mnp2-4 and v.42 error correction and MNP 5 and v.42 bis data compression. Taking its data compression

into consideration, the actual performance speed of this modem could reach 115.02 kilobits per second.

The SmartLink 56K voice series supports most operating systems including Windows NT 3.51 and 4.0, Windows 95 and DOS versions from 3.3 or higher.

As for its operation, the modem has auto fall-back forward from 56,000 Kbps to 300bps. It has serial, binary or asynchronous 7 or 8 data bit.

For further information, contact Kayyali Corp. at 5520310.

keting them.

Software is a non-material item, that provides major materialistic results. It organizes work-flow, reduces unnecessary procedures, gives immediate and efficient over-views and reporting facilities. It allows users to reduce their expenditures, while expanding their activities. This generates more profits for the business.

Software allows managers and owners to project and analyze their potential growth, which is key to improving strategic management decisions.

This is such a wide view, that many people do not have the patience or the know-how to accept. It takes years of data-accumulation in an organized manner, to improve management performance. So, data and the way to organize it are the key points of software development.

There seems to be little appreciation given to historical data and to organization, in all projects in all fields within the country; thus, little emphasis is given to software developments and low budgets are provided. Of course, the situation differs enor-

mously abroad. Software is priced at around 20% of the cost of the hardware needed to run it! Companies purchasing information technology solutions need to set aside a separate software budget.

Until the value of concepts like feasibility studies, analysis of needs, efficiency and others are realized to the full in Jordan, tailor-made software will remain unappreciated. This is and will continue to cause suffering and lack of actual results for programmers and system analysts in the Jordanian market.

INTERFACE BY ZEID NASSER

Jordan's PC market & pricing: What a mess!

WELL, IT has become a custom of ours to take a look at the state of PC prices in Jordan, every couple of months or so. With the fast shifts in pricing we are witnessing nowadays, even a weekly "market-watch" is necessary.

In the past, we looked at the issue of PC pricing from the view of the consumer. It's worth examining the views of PC suppliers and sellers, who are the ones setting the prices in the market.

PC suppliers are mainly two groups. Those who sell at a high profit margin and those who settle for a lower one. Among the lower-margin sellers, are the assemblers. Assembled PCs have dipped so much in price nowadays that it is quite common to come across a 200MMX Pentium system—complete but without multimedia—for around JD 570. Now, that is startling!

Upon talking to suppliers about this, they stated that it is quite obvious that companies making such an offering are settling for some JD 30 profit per PC. That's ridiculously low.

As a buyer, this fact should draw your attention simply because a company that makes a measly profit of JD 30 on a PC system cannot afford to provide after-sales support. It's also not likely that such a company will remain in the market for too long.

It may be safer to pay an extra JD 100 for your PC. After all, today's buyers don't base their decision on the PC itself, but on the supplier, especially as most suppliers offer you comparable-performance PCs.

If, of course, you're a risk-taker, or a user who is not worried or concerned about his/her PC malfunctioning, then you'll probably go for the cheaper system!

Getting back to the suppliers, it has to be remembered that brand PCs have dropped in price and are nearing the levels of reasonably priced assembled systems.

A prominent supplier of assembled PCs said that his company is actually shifting to selling American brand PCs, which are relatively expensive, but getting cheaper all the time. What's more, they provide a reasonable profit and can be sold on the merit of brand name.

The assemblers I talked to all expressed their displeasure at the heated price competition in the market, and discussed the wave of smuggling that can be clearly witnessed in the ultra-low prices of some systems.

Apparently, computer parts are smuggled into Jordan, via air or land travellers. These parts are cheaper as they didn't pass through customs. Accordingly, PC systems end up being much cheaper. Anyway, the result is that major PC suppliers in Jordan are moving away from the end-user/consumer market and are now heavily targeting the corporate market as profits can be achieved in volume sales from that sector. But even in the corporate market, organizational buyers are cost-sensitive and they are willing to accept a tender from an unknown company, without a track record, as long as the PC systems it offers are cheaper. The situation is certainly messy!

Among the solutions being discussed is the establishment of an association for hardware suppliers, allowing them to get organized and providing buyers with an easy point of reference about companies. The way it will work is by creating certain standards, which are the minimum requirements for a PC supplier to be awarded a membership in the association. By doing so, buyers will be better protected from the results of dealing with incapable suppliers and the organized efforts will help deliver more professionalism in services.

It sounds like a reasonable idea. The question is whether the major PC dealers and suppliers in the country will get together and initiate action?

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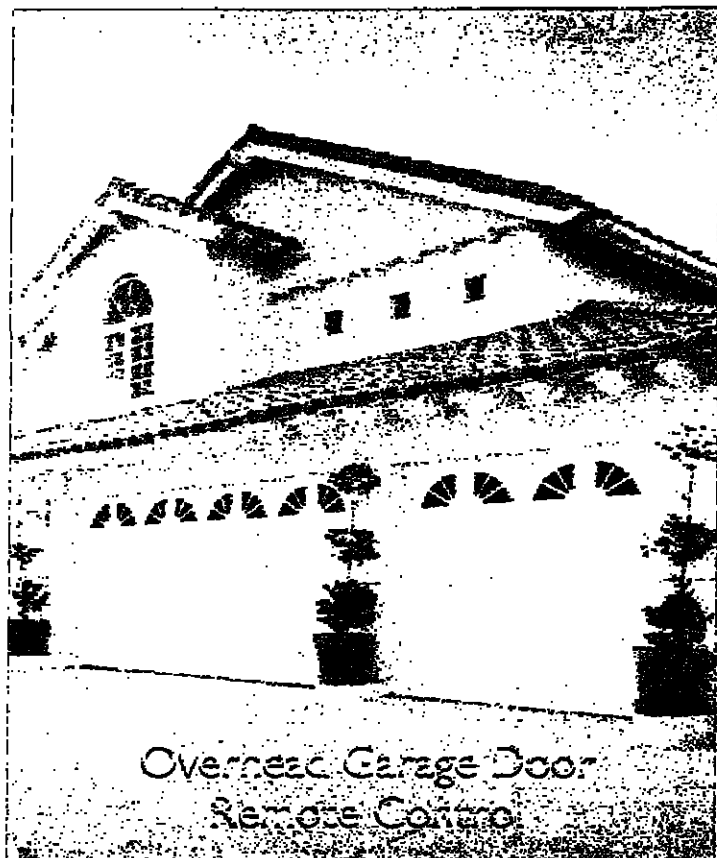
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Oriental Media springs latest fashions

THIS UPCOMING fashion show—the first of its kind in Jordan—comes on the heels of the immensely successful Oriental Media Winter Fashion Show organized in Amman's Inter-Continental Hotel last December. There, top Jordanian fashion organizers enthused over displays of the latest styles, presented in a way so unique it was the very definition of elegance itself.

This year's festival promises to continue the tradition, with even more of the very latest in evening wear and wedding dress, men's suits, displays of modern sportswear, shoes, wallets, accessories and sunglasses, as well as demonstrations of attractive hair styling. A dinner and soiree are also slated for the event.

Members of the audience will be able not only to keep abreast of the latest line in the fashion world; they'll also have an opportunity to win one of 300 prizes in a lottery drawn from entrance cards. In addition, a contest will be organized to choose the best male and female models. ■



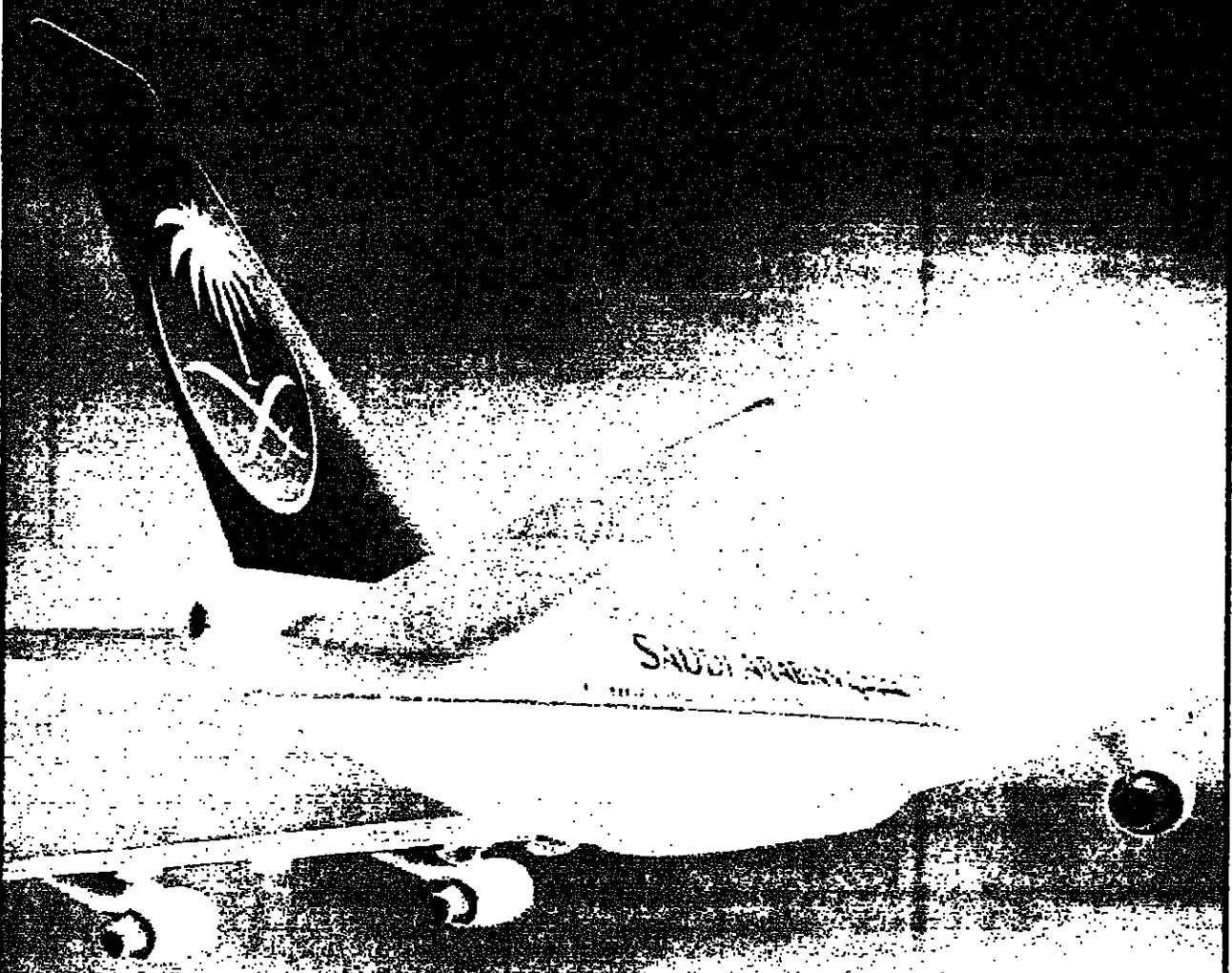
New booking system for Radisson SAS

ON 1 March, the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman welcomed Mr Eric Roselaar, the first guest booked at the Hotel through the chain's unique reservation system CURTIS-C. Since the official banding on 1 March, both the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman and the Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba are linked to Radisson's innovative electronic reservation system. "Expectations to receive a major number of bookings into our hotels via CURTIS-C are high," says Lawrence Steeman, Director of Sales and Marketing in Jordan. ■



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Centre Culturel Français et de Coopération Linguistique d'Amman

Dans le cadre des Journées de la Francophonie à Amman organisées conjointement par les Ambassades de Bulgarie, Canada, Confédération Helvétique, Egypte, France, Liban, Maroc, Roumanie et Tunisie en collaboration avec la Municipalité du Grand Amman

Le Centre Culturel Français et de Coopération Linguistique d'Amman a le plaisir de vous inviter à:

Date	Heure	Activités
Samedi 14 Mars	18h30	Conférence
Lundi 16 Mars	18h30	Conférence
Mardi 17 Mars	20h30	Films
Vendredi 20 Mars	10h00	Concours
	17h00	Vernissage
	18h00	Conférence

Salah STETIE: "Francophonie, langue des autres"
Gaston CHERPILLON: Présentation littéraire "Le fleuve aux grandes eaux" de Frédéric BACK
"Diva" de Jean-Jacques BEINEIX
Exposition des dessins d'enfants: Illustration de contes francophones
Remise des prix aux gagnants
Exposition de pastels: dessins et toiles par l'artiste peintre Paul DE GOBERT
Conférence sur un projet de fresque murale à Amman par l'artiste Paul DE GOBERT

Pour tout autre renseignement téléphoner au CCCL: Tél. 46 37 009 - 46 36 445

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